

GREAT CHRISTIAN ARTISTS



THE MADONNA OF THE GRAND DUKE—RAPHAEL
In the Pitti Palace, Florence

GREAT CHRISTIAN ARTISTS

LEONARDO DA VINCI, RAPHAEL, MICHELANGELO,
FRA ANGELICO, MURILLO, RUBENS, VAN DYCK

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DEDICATION
TO THE VIRGIN-MOTHER THE FAIR INSPIRATION
OF CHRISTIAN ART

PREFACE



THIS is a common-place that from the Church has come the greatest inspiration of the art of later days and that the greatest of artists have been the most deeply Christian, but one can find cause to regret that so considerable a number even among ourselves, do not realize enough the significance of this familiar remark. The rich heritage of Christian art and the story of the great Christian artists need to be brought closer home to us.

In the present volume, the writer has turned a bit aside from his customary paths of composition to gather together in convenient and accessible form some of the more interesting details concerning the life and work of seven among the greatest of Christian artists. Needless to say no pretension is made in a work of this kind to original research or investigation. The chief purpose has been to interest and inform the reader and to make accessible for him materials which he would otherwise have to seek for through many volumes; use has also been made of some personal observations and experiences abroad.

For this reason copious quotations have been given from authors who will be found mentioned in the text, especially from Vasari, that loving chronicler of the lives of the painters, whose works, though they are not always accurate and trustworthy, form still one of the richest mines of interesting material. It is to be hoped that many readers, after having caught fire of new interest from these pages, may go on to read more and perhaps even to make a detailed study of the life and work of the painters whom they most admire. They will find ample sources in any well-equipped library, and the progress of the critical history of art continually supplies new material for such studies.

In a book intended for reading rather than for scientific study, it is scarcely practicable to indicate at each step the sources from which details have been drawn, and the reader is referred to the collections of our libraries for the standard works on each artist to which acknowledgments are due for this or that particular.

No one can read even the partial chronicle of the great painters as it is simply told in these pages without perceiving how intimately human nature and human life are bound up with their art. Thus the study of art has the power to introduce us to a deeper and truer knowledge of life. Through the great religious works of the masters we may even penetrate more profoundly into the comprehension of our Faith itself, which was the inspiration of their loftiest works. It was the glow, the fervor, the human appeal and heavenly beauty of our Faith that kindled their purest genius.

We have chosen seven from among the greatest of Christian artists who represent in themselves most varied types of genius, but a singular resemblance of inspiration. Da Vinci with his sublime originality, his stupendous versatility; Raphael with his pure and lofty inspiration, the unearthly grace and beauty of his works; Michelangelo, titantic in power, weariless in toil, sublime in execution; Fra Angelico, heavenly in his charming simplicity and in the celestial look of his rapt countenances; Murillo, whose realism is wedded to so extraordinary an ideal of Faith and beauty; Rubens, whose Flemish vigor burgeoned into exuberant revels of artistic power; Van Dyck, whose intense feeling and originality lent such charm to sacred subjects; all these, with all their various colors of genius and disposition, owe to the Christian spirit the noblest achievements of their art. Each one of them reflects with a different beauty the single ray of Christian inspiration.

It is hoped, therefore, that the readers of these pages, and especially those whose taste is forming and whose enthusiasm is still fresh with youth, may take herefrom such an interest in Christian art as may grow into a precious and permanent possession. If such good result should follow on the reading, the modest purpose of this book will have been achieved. We offer it especially to schools and to all those who have to do with the formation of the taste and the character of youth.

For the material used in this volume, we make grateful and general acknowledgments to the writers mentioned in each article as well as to several of the following books. We give this list as

an indication to the studious reader of sources of matter concerning the artists dealt with in these chapters. The list is not exhaustive, nor are all the books quoted of the same merit. A visit to the local library will perhaps be the most satisfactory means of securing further information concerning these great Christian artists.

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GREAT CHRISTIAN ARTISTS

LEONARDO DA VINCI



IF some painstaking historian, well versed in the lore of all ages were to set himself the task of discerning the most accomplished artist and the most universal genius who has ever graced the tide of times, he would have many promising claimants to the title to consider. But when he had looked them all over and weighed the claims of each, it is very probable that for variety of genius and singularly great accomplishment in many spheres of human effort he would award the palm at last to the subject of this sketch. It was on the second of May in the year 1519 that this prodigy of talent left the world, regretting, despite all his achievements, that he had offended God and mankind in not having labored at his art as he ought to have done.

In our age of specialists, when the wide and varied knowledge which every man of education was presumed to have in the fine culture of an earlier day has given place to a narrowing down of the individual's special knowledge to one small sphere, the genius of Leonardo seems almost fabulous. That a man should be at the same time the father of the great painters of the Renaissance, a sculptor of singular eminence, a marvelous architect, a skilled musician, a mechanic whose inventive power and breadth of imagination foreshadowed the use of steam, the heavier-than-air flying machine and the automobile, an engineer who could devise at will new machines for the uses of war and of peace, and a natural philosopher whose investigations foreshadowed many a modern discovery and whose method anticipated the writings of Francis Bacon by a hundred years—all this is marvelous enough. But when we learn that it is true of Leonardo as it was said of Goldsmith by a partial friend, "There was nothing that he did not touch on, nothing that he touched on that he did not adorn," then our wonder becomes astonishment. To be a Jack of all trades, or of



THE ANNUNCIATION
In the Uffizi, Florence

all arts and sciences for that matter, is not unusual in human history. To be master of them all is exceptional and sublime.

But besides the extraordinary genius which made Leonardo da Vinci the marvel of his own age of the Renaissance, one of the most brilliant of the world, and the admiration of succeeding centuries, there is another circumstance which makes him especially interesting to Catholics. Despite the insinuations of some shallow commentators with whom the wish is father to the thought, and who seek from certain obscure and rare allusions in his writings and from their own imaginations to cast a slur upon his Catholic loyalty, Leonardo da Vinci was a faithful son of the Church and lived and died in her communion. Like the other great masters of the Renaissance, his inspiration as an artist came in great measure from the faith whose holy mysteries offer to art so inexhaustible a source. Like the other masters, one of his dearest tasks was the portrayal of the Madonna; and, seeing the charming way in which he made visible the teaching of the Church concerning this most human and heavenly Virgin and Mother, one is only sorry that he has not left us more work from his brush in illustration of the holy mysteries.

Indeed it is the fragmentary character of some of his work that one must regret. Though he lived sixty-seven years and was incessantly active for much of that period, no man could touch so many things so well without scanting his achievement in this or that particular. So, as his ardent biographer Vasari confesses, he left nearly everything unfinished. "It is said," relates Vasari, "that a work being given to him to execute by the Pope, he immediately began to distill oils and herbs in order to make the varnish; whereupon Pope Leo exclaimed, 'Ah me! he will never do anything, for he begins by thinking about the end before the beginning of the work.'"

Yet, although he so hastened to achieve his end, Leonardo could labor for years to do justice to his art, and perhaps it was his extreme desire to do all perfectly that made him leave so much unfinished. When he undertook to paint for Francesco del Gio-

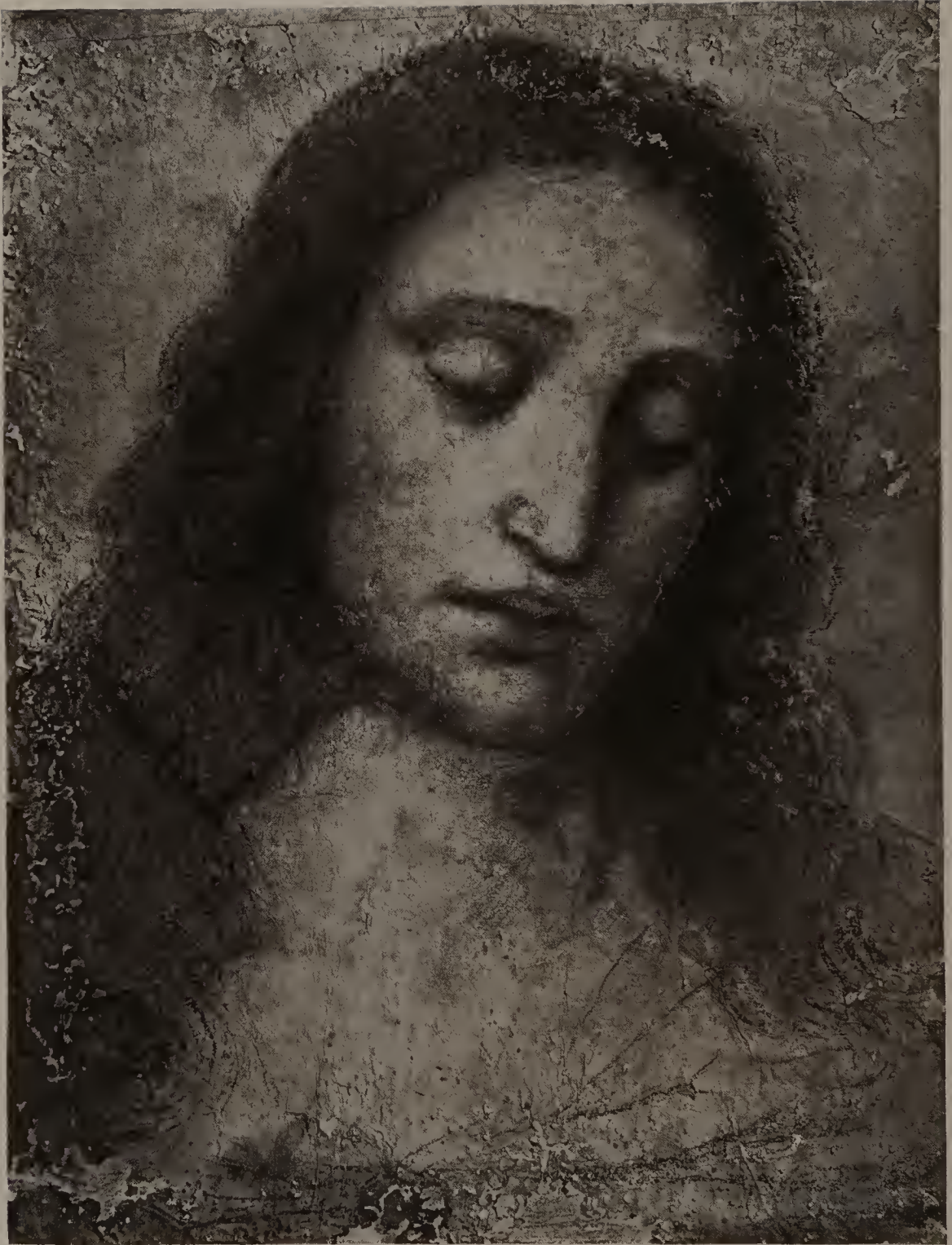


THE ANNUNCIATION IN DETAIL
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

condo the portrait of Monna Lisa, his wife, he lingered over it four years. This picture is known to all the world and has been the occasion of endless discussion by reason of what the commentators have been pleased to describe as its enigmatic expression. But this slight smile as one author prudently observes, is merely the calm and balanced cheerfulness of a pure and good woman, wrapped in sweet content. What efforts Leonardo used to capture this elusive smile are thus described by his biographer: "He employed also this device: Monna Lisa being very beautiful, while he drew her picture he retained those who played or sang and continually jested, that they might make her continue merry, in order to take away that melancholy that painters are often used to give to the portraits which they paint. And in this picture of Leonardo's there was a smile so pleasing that the sight of it was a thing more divine than human; and it was held to be a marvel, in that it was not other than alive."

The same Vasari speaks of a similar care and ingenuity shown by Leonardo when the commission was given to him for a cartoon for a door-hanging which was to be executed in Flanders, woven in gold and silk, in order to be sent to the King of Portugal. The subject was Adam and Eve in the earthly paradise, "wherein Leonardo drew with the brush in chiaroscuro, heightened with white, a meadow of endless kinds of herbage, with some animals, of which, in truth, one could say that, for diligence and truth to nature, wit could not make the like. In it is the fig tree, with the foreshortening of the leaves and the various aspects of the branches executed with such care that the brain turns at the mere thought of how a man could have such patience. There is also a palm tree that has the radiating crown of the palm, executed with so great and marvelous art that only the patience and brain of Leonardo was able to accomplish it. This work was not carried farther; hence the cartoon is now at Florence, in the illustrious house of the Magnificent Ottaviano de Medici, given to him not long since by the uncle of Leonardo."

The care with which Leonardo painted the Last Supper for the Friars of St. Dominic at Santa Maria delle Grazie, at Milan, has



THE SAVIOR—STUDY FOR DETAIL OF THE LAST SUPPER
In the Brera, Milan

passed into a story. Indeed so long did he labor and so often did he meditate that the good prior of the monastery complained to the duke and begged him to make Leonardo finish, since he was losing half a day at a time without ever using his brush, but merely pondering, lost in thought. After all, some writers say, he left the head of Christ unfinished, thinking that he was not able to give it that divine air which is looked for in the image of Christ, because "he could not think that it was possible to conceive in the imagination that beauty and celestial grace which ought to belong to God Incarnate." More recent authors declare however, that the Last Supper was completely finished, and that statements to the contrary are to be considered merely legends. Its present condition they say and particularly that of the countenance of Christ, is due to Leonardo's imprudent fad for experimentation as well as to other causes. He was long also in finishing the face of Judas, "not believing that it was possible to imagine a face which should express the countenance of him who, after so many benefits received, had a mind so cruel as to resolve upon the betrayal of his Lord and the Creator of the world."

We might remark in passing that this disposition of Leonardo, reverent and appreciative of sacred things, should offer matter for meditation to those who question his Catholic faith. But we adduce the instance now as another example of how earnestly he labored in his art and yet left always something unfinished, as if in despair of making the deed as lovely as his thought.

Vasari seems to be of this opinion also, for after telling the story of the Last Supper he continues: "While he was occupied with this work, he proposed to the duke to make a horse in bronze, of an extraordinary greatness, in order to place upon it, as a memorial, the image of the duke. And on so large a scale he began and went forward with it that he was never able to bring it to completion. And there are those who have held the opinion (since the judgments of men are various, and often malign out of envy) that Leonardo, as in the case of his other works, began it and did not finish it, in that, being of so great a size, he encountered an incredible difficulty in the attempt to cast it in a single piece; and one

would also be able to think that, for this reason, many may have formed such a judgment, although not a few of his works have remained unfinished. But, in truth, one may believe that his vast and most excellent mind was hindered in being too full of desire; and that the wish ever to seek out excellence upon excellence and perfection upon perfection was the cause of it."

There remains to us also the story of another picture of Leonardo wrought with infinite pain but which has not survived. "It is said that Ser Piero da Vinci, at his villa, was besought, as a favor, by a peasant in charge of his estate who had made a buckler with his own hands out of a fig tree which he had cut down on the farm, to get it painted for him at Florence; which he very willingly did, since the countryman was very ready in catching birds and fishing, and Ser Piero made great use of him in those pursuits. Whereupon, having taken this buckler with him to Florence, without telling Leonardo whose it was, Ser Piero asked him to paint something upon it. Leonardo, having one day taken this buckler in his hands, and seeing it twisted, ill-made and clumsy, straightened it by the fire, and, having given it to a turner, from the rough and clumsy thing that it was caused it to be made smooth and equal; and afterwards, having covered it with *gesso*, and having prepared it after his own method, he began to think of what he might paint on it that should be able to terrify all who should come upon it, producing the same effect as once did the head of Medusa.

"Leonardo, therefore, to this end, carried to a room into which no one entered but himself alone slow-worms, lizards, field-crickets, snakes, moths, grasshoppers, bats, and other kinds of such-like animals, out of the number of which, variously put together, he evolved a most horrible and terrifying creature, which poisoned the air with its breath and turned it into flame; and he represented it coming from out a dark and jagged rock, belching poison from its open throat and fire from its eyes and smoke from its nostrils, in so strange a manner that it seemed altogether a monstrous and horrible thing; and such pains did he take in executing it that although the smell of the dead animals in the room was very noi-

some it was not perceived by Leonardo, so great was the passion that he bore toward his art.

"The work, which was no longer asked for either by the countryman or his father, being finished, Leonardo told the latter that he might send for the buckler at his convenience, since, for his part, it was finished. Ser Piero therefore, having gone one morning to the room for it, and having knocked at the door, Leonardo opened it to him, asking him to wait a little; and, after he had adjusted the buckler to the light on the easel, and put to the window in order to lower the light, he made him come in and see it. Ser Piero, at the first glance, taken unawares, immediately started, not thinking that that was the buckler, nor that the figure which he saw there was merely painted and falling back a step, Leonardo checked him, saying, "This work serves the turn for which it was made: take it, then, and carry it away, since this is the effect that it was intended to produce."

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the position of Leonardo da Vinci in the world of art. He was, as it has been said, both an inheritor and a perfecter. His efforts to "conquer the kingdom of light and shade," and at the same time to carry the old Florentine perfections of linear drawing and shades of expression to a degree to which other men have never even aspired, opened the way for the triumph of after painters. His drawings, even the illustrative pen sketches scattered through his autobiographical and scientific manuscripts, are the chief treasures of many collections and among the most precious expressions of human genius.

It is interesting, by the way as one author remarks, to observe that the peculiarity of the shading of these drawings, downward from left to right, lends probability to the statement of one of his intimate friends that the great master was left-handed.

As for the scientific achievements of Leonardo, he was a pioneer centuries in advance of his age. The more the range and nature of his studies become known the more he is seen to be a lonely mountain peak of science, thrusting up far above the heads of all his contemporaries and catching gleams of a dawn which

others were not to see for hundreds of years. Living a century before Francis Bacon, he showed a firmer grasp than he of the very principles of experimentation of which that worthy is deemed by so many the discoverer, while in actual experiment and correct conclusion he far surpasses him of Verulam. The vast misfortune to science was that there was no one to take up the tradition of Leonardo and carry on his investigations. No one of his immediate successors employed the sound and wide methods of experiment in which he put his trust, and thus no one continued what he had so wonderfully begun.

In mathematics and astronomy, in mechanics, hydraulics and physics, in geology, geography and cosmology, in anatomy—in a word, in all the known sciences this marvelous spirit made investigations and foreshadowed discoveries which were so far beyond the scope of his contemporaries even to understand that his most devoted biographers regarded the great mass of his observations and speculations as mere whims and fancies, and it is only a very late day that has seen the deciphering of his manuscripts in their queer writing from right to left, and the recognition of his astonishing genius in the sciences. Looking over his notebooks as they have been deciphered and published in modern times, one is astonished at the variety of the problems he raises, the diversity of his speculations and the fecundity of his invention. Withal he kept to the principle that one must experiment and verify. In order to achieve the proficiency in anatomy which one discerns in his sketches Uzielli declares that Leonardo himself asserted that he had dissected more than thirty human bodies! Other authors, however, give a lesser number.

Add to these astonishing achievements the personal qualities of Leonardo, and one has little difficulty in understanding why he will remain illustrious for all time as one of the most naturally gifted of mortals. He was of singular personal charm. "Beyond the beauty of body, never to be sufficiently extolled, there was an endless grace in all his actions," says Vasari. "In him great physical force was joined to a dexterity, spirit and courage ever royal

and magnanimous. Truly marvelous and celestial was Leonardo." He had made with his own hands a silver lyre for the Duke of Milan, whereby "He surpassed all the musicians that had assembled there to play. Moreover he was the best improviser in verse of his time. The duke, hearing the marvelous discourse of Leonardo, became so enamored of his genius that it was a thing incredible."

He had, besides, most affable and engaging manners and a bodily strength that was the wonder of his contemporaries. "With a splendor of his countenance which was most beautiful he made serene every broken spirit; and with his words he turned to yea or nay every obstinate intention. By his bodily strength he would restrain any violent outburst of anger; and with his right hand twisted the iron ring of a bell or a horseshoe as if it had been lead. With his liberality he used to gather together and support every friend, both poor and rich, if only he had wit and virtue. He adorned and honored in all his actions no matter what despised and bare abode; for which reason Florence received, indeed, a very great gift in the birth of Leonardo and an infinite loss in his death."

From the time when, a radiant youth, he was, as the *Anonimo Gaddiano* has described him, "of a fine person well proportioned, full of grace and of a beautiful aspect, clad in a rose-colored tunic short to the knee, and with his fine beard, curled and well kept, reaching down to the middle of his breast," to the time when, an old man, still comely and majestic, he dwelt, surrounded by his friends, under the patronage of Francis I, da Vinci seems always to have led a peaceful, joyous existence, undisturbed by either the political agitations of the day or by the passions of his heart. From all we can learn of him he was a man of innocent life, zealous in labor, insatiable in his desire for learning, honorable and good, generous to a degree, and faithful to the teachings of the Church whose art he has so wonderfully enriched even as much by the power his work has lent to others' hands as by his own paintings.

To give more than the bare outlines of the great master's life would exceed our present limits. Born at Vinci near Florence in 1452, the natural son of a notary named Ser Piero and a peasant



MADONNA OF THE ROCKS
In the Louvre, Paris

woman, he was brought up by his father with great care, and early manifested his extraordinary gifts. About his fifteenth year he began the study of art in Verocchio's studio, and Perugino was one of his fellow students. He was allowed access to the famous collection of antiquities which the Medicis had made at Florence, and of which we have spoken in the chapter on Michelangelo. But of the products of the youthful genius few remain to us. Towards the end of 1482, he entered the service of Ludovico il Moro, the regent of Milan. Leonardo was at that time thirty years of age. As to his qualifications, a letter in which he offers his services to Ludovico is preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. We take the following translation of it from the article on da Vinci in the Catholic Encyclopedia, to which also we make acknowledgment for other details of his life:

"I have a process," he says, "for constructing very light, portable bridges for the pursuit of the enemy; others more solid, which will resist fire and assault, and may be easily set in place and taken to pieces. I also know ways of burning and destroying those of the enemy. . . . I can also construct a very manageable piece of artillery which projects inflammable materials, causing great damage to the enemy and also great terror because of the smoke. . . . Where the use of cannon is impracticable, I can replace them by catapults and engines for casting shafts with wonderful and hitherto unknown effect; briefly, whatever the circumstances, I can contrive countless methods of attack. In the event of a naval battle I have numerous engines of great power both for attack and defense, vessels which are proof against the hottest fire, powder or steam. In times of peace I believe that I can equal anyone in architecture, whether for the building of public or private monuments. I sculpture in marble, bronze and terra cotta; in painting I can do what another can do, it matters not who he may be." The seeming boastfulness of this frank statement is palliated by the wonderful circumstance that it was true!

It was while at Milan that Leonardo is said to have painted that marvelous "Madonna of the Rocks," now one of the treasures of

the Louvre, and which one sees in the great hall in company with others of da Vinci's works, Monna Lisa, now happily restored to the collection; St. John the Baptist, etc. Another "Madonna of the Rocks," also said to be by da Vinci, is to be found at the National Gallery in London. It is disputed which of these two madonnas is the original. (See "The Month," London, April, 1912.)

While at Milan, Leonardo also painted that immortal picture of "The Last Supper" which may still be seen, where we have visited it with delight, in the refectory of the Dominican Convent of Milan now kept as a museum. The picture was painted in oils and dampness soon began to ruin it. A door was opened in the wall and one sees how it mutilated the picture, cutting off the feet of Christ and of two of the apostles. Unskillful restoration injured the work and finally Napoleon's army made a stable of the refectory, and his soldiers, despite his orders to respect it, contributed their share to the injuries of this famous picture.

Entering the ancient refectory of the monks not long ago, we saw at the farther end, dimmed with age and hard usage, but beautiful still in its majestic outlines, this most famous painting. Prepared by what we had heard of its sad state of decay to find only a melancholy ruin, we were surprised to discover how much of charm and beauty still hang about this master's work. The face of Christ is indeed sadly obscured, yet it looks forth with a divine majesty and sadness. The figures of the apostles have lost their freshness, but they keep a life and reality which far fresher paintings often lack. Once more we seem to hear that woeful sentence "Amen, I say unto you that one of you is about to betray Me," and once more the sudden wave of intense emotion, stirred by those words of the Saviour, runs through the groups of the apostles and divides them with marvelous harmony into groups of threes. One can remain looking long at the vast composition and finding always some new meaning and suggestion in the looks, the gestures, the attitudes of these sublime figures.

Many old walls in Europe bear priceless treasures of art on their cracked and ancient surfaces. Of them all, two perhaps



THE MADONNA, THE INFANT JESUS, AND ST. ANNE
In the Louvre, Paris

obtain and merit most reverence and admiration from the world. One is the wall of the Sistine chapel which bears Michelangelo's "Last Judgment," the other is that of the old refectory at Milan which carries da Vinci's "Last Supper." Both have suffered from the years, both lost their original freshness and with it some of the beauty they had from the hand of the master, but both will long draw the pilgrimages of the nations when brighter and better kept pictures are forgotten.

For more than fifteen years da Vinci worked on a bronze equestrian statue of Ludovico il Moro and he had made all ready for casting it when the French captured Milan in 1499, drove out Ludovico and broke the plaster model for his statue. Deprived of a patron, Leonardo began a wandering life from Milan to Mantua, then to Venice and Florence where he became head of the corps of engineers of Cesare Borgia. Then he went back to Florence, and finally settled again at Milan. In 1516 came a summons from Francis I to enter his service in France and da Vinci set forth from his native land to which he never was to return.

The king allotted to him seven thousand crowns a year and gave him for residence the beautiful Chateau of Cloux near Amboise. It was there that Leonardo died at 67 years of age on the second of May, 1519. Besides the pictures we have mentioned, not many of his authentic works survive. In the London Academy and at the Louvre are two different versions of the same theme, The Blessed Virgin, seated upon the lap of her mother St. Anne, and holding out her arms to the Divine Child. "Art possesses few groups more charming," says Louis Gillet, "than that of these two women, one seated on the other's knee."

The same writer has this to say of the scientific studies of Leonardo, which he pursued with tireless industry especially after he left the service of Ludovico. "Long before Bacon, and with a far different range of application, he invented the positive sciences. As a geologist, for example, he discerned that there was a 'history of the earth;' that the outside of the globe was not formed at a single stroke, and in this history, guided by studies of hydraulics, he suc-



ST. ANNE—DETAIL
In the Louvre, Paris

cessfully saw through the function of water. He divined the true nature of fossils. In botany he formulated the laws of the alternations of leaves, that of the eccentricity of trunks, and that of solar attraction. As an anatomist (he had dissected nine bodies) he gave figures concerning the insertion of the muscles and their movements which specialists still admire for their accuracy. He devised the earliest theories concerning the muscular movements of the cardiac valves. By his studies in embryology he laid the foundations for comparative anatomy. In mechanics he understood the power of steam and if he did not invent any action machines he at least made it an agent of propulsion, for he invented a steam cannon. He composed explosives and shells.

"But perhaps his most modern title to fame lies in his having laid down the principle of aviation, devoting years to this task. He foresaw nearly all the forms, parachute and montgolfier, but by boldly adhering to the 'heavier than air' principle he constructed the first artificial bird. Long series of studies analyze with astonishing clearness the flight of the bird, the form and movement of the wing. Leonardo distinguishes between the soaring flight and that made by successive flappings, in each case defining the action of the air and the part played by it; he understands that the bird rises obliquely on an aerial inclined plane, forming under it a kind of angle and that currents form in the concavity of the wing which serve it as momentary supports to recover its equilibrium, like the waves on which the oar is rested to propel the boat."

"In Leonardo" he says in another place "knowledge and art are never separate. The characteristics frequently seen in the men of the Renaissance, the encyclopedic turn of mind so striking in a Leone Battista Alberti, a Bramante, or a Durer, is never more brilliantly evident than in Leonardo da Vinci. His method is based exclusively on observation and experiment." He describes Leonardo in another passage as "this extraordinary man who united in himself the triple or quadruple genius of an Apelles, an Aristides, a Euclid, and an Archimedes. * * * His influence on painting was supreme; it has been shown above what paths his genius opened

to historical painting, to portraiture, to scenes of sanctity, landscapes, and the art of chiaroscuro."

Sir Sidney Colvin in his biographical article on Leonardo in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* thus sums up his genius and his character:

"History tells of no man gifted in the same degree as Leonardo was at once for art and science. In art he was an inheritor and perfecter, born in a day of great and many-sided endeavors on which he put the crown, surpassing both predecessors and contemporaries. In science, on the other hand, he was a pioneer, working wholly for the future, and in great part alone. That the two stupendous gifts should in some degree neutralize each other was inevitable. No imaginable strength of any single man would have sufficed to carry out a hundredth part of what Leonardo essayed. The mere attempt to conquer the kingdom of light and shade for the art of painting was destined to tax the skill of generations, and is perhaps not wholly and finally accomplished yet. Leonardo sought to achieve that conquest and at the same time to carry the old Florentine excellences of linear drawing and psychological expression to a perfection of which other men had not dreamed. The result, though marvellous in quality, is in quantity lamentably meagre. Knowing and doing allured him equally, and in art, which consists in doing, his efforts were often paralysed by his strained desire to know. The thirst for knowledge had first been aroused in him by the desire of perfecting the images of beauty and power which it was his business to create.

"Thence there grew upon him the passion of knowledge for its own sake. In the splendid balance of his nature the Virgilian longing, '*rerum cognoscere causas*' could never indeed wholly silence the call to exercise his active powers. But the powers he cared most to exercise ceased by degree to be those of imaginative creation, and came to be those of turning to practical human use the mastery which his studies had taught him over the forces of nature. In science he was the first among modern men to set himself most of those problems which unnumbered searchers of later genera-

tions have laboured severally or in concert to solve. Florence had had other sons of comprehensive genius, artistic and mechanical, Leon Battista Alberti perhaps the chief. But the more the range and character of Leonardo's studies becomes ascertained the more his greatness dwarfs them all.

"A hundred years before Bacon, say those who can judge best, he showed a firmer grasp of the principles of experimental science than Bacon showed, fortified by a far wider range of actual experiment and observation. Not in his actual conclusions, though many of these point with surprising accuracy in the direction of truths established by later generations, but in the soundness, the wisdom, the tenacity of his methods lies his great title to glory. * * * Had Leonardo even left behind him any one with zeal and knowledge enough to extract from the mass of his manuscripts some portion of his labours in those sciences and given them to the world, an incalculable impulse would have been given to all those enquiries by which mankind has since been striving to understand the laws of its being and control the conditions of its environment,—to mathematics and astronomy, to mechanics, hydraulics, and physics generally, to geology, geography, and cosmology, to anatomy and the sciences of life. As it was, these studies of Leonardo—'studies intense of strong and stern delight'—seemed to his trivial followers and biographers merely his whims and fancies, *ghiribizzi*, things to be spoken of slightly and with apology. The manuscripts, with the single exception of some of those relating to painting, lay unheeded and undivulged until the present generation; and it is only now that the true range of Leonardo's powers is beginning to be fully discerned.

"So much for the intellectual side of Leonardo's character and career. As a moral being we are less able to discern what he was like. The man who carried in his brain so many images of subtle beauty, as well as so much of the hidden science of the future, must have lived spiritually, in the main, alone. Of things communicable he was at the same time, as we have said, communicative—a genial companion, a generous and loyal friend, ready and eloquent of dis-

course, impressing all with whom he was brought in contact by the power and the charm of genius, and inspiring fervent devotion and attachment in friends and pupils. We see him living on terms of constant affection with his father, and in disputes with his brothers not the aggressor but the sufferer from aggression. We see him full of tenderness to animals, a virtue not common in Italy in spite of the example of St. Francis; open-handed in giving, not eager in getting—‘poor,’ he says, ‘is the man of many wants,’ not prone to resentment—‘the best shield against injustice is to double the cloak of long-suffering,’ zealous in labour above all men—‘as a day well spent gives joyful sleep, so does a life well spent give joyful death.’ With these instincts and maxims, and with his strength, granting it almost more than human, spent ever tunnelling in abstruse mines of knowledge, his moral experience is not likely to have been deeply troubled.

“In religion, he regarded the faith of his age and country at least with imaginative sympathy and intellectual acquiescence, if no more. On the political storms which shook his country and drove him from one employment to another, he seems to have looked not with the passionate participation of a Dante or a Michelangelo but rather with the serene detachment of a Goethe. In matters of the heart, if any consoling or any disturbing passion played a great part in his life, we do not know it; we know only (apart from a few passing shadows cast by calumny and envy) of affectionate and dignified relations with friends, patrons and pupils, of public and private regard mixed in the days of his youth with dazzled admiration, and in those of his age with something of reverential awe.”

We visited not long since the chateau near Amboise where da Vinci spent his last years and where he died. It is a lovely spot, lifted high on a hill, with two lordly stairways leading up on either side, one a huge spiral up which mounted horsemen can ride abreast, the other a similarly gigantic ramp designed so that a whole coach and four can drive up its gradual ascent. The beauty of the chateau and its surroundings intrigue the beholder. But

when we entered the lovely chapel and examined in detail its lace-like carvings in stone, there was one inscription which took our eyes beyond all other objects. It declares that beneath this stone rest the bones of those who had been buried near the chateau and whose mortal remains had all been assembled together in this one place. And among them, unidentified and undistinguished from the rest, if we may believe the inscription, are the bones of Leonardo da Vinci.

Let us conclude this sketch of the most accomplished man of all the ages by the account of his death given by his faithful biographer Vasari. Remark the touching devotion of the old master to the Blessed Sacrament, his regrets that with all his labors he had not done more for God and for mankind, his eagerness to be instructed "of the good way and holy Christian religion," his confession and his penitence, which are vividly portrayed by the old writer. The statement that he died in the arms of Francis I is now denied. However that may be, one cannot doubt that the description of his holy dispositions and his devout death is true. It was a fitting end to a noble life. We shall let the biographer tell us in his own quaint way of Leonardo's passing:

"At length, having become old, he remained ill many months, and, finding himself near to death, he wished to be diligently informed of the matters of the Catholic faith, of the good way and holy Christian religion, and then, with many sighs, confessed and was penitent. And although he was not able to raise himself well on his feet, supporting himself on the arms of his friends and servants, he wished to receive devoutly the most Holy Sacrament out of his bed. The king, who often and lovingly was used to visit him, came to see him, whereupon he, out of reverence, having raised himself to sit upon the bed, giving an account of his illness and the circumstances of it, showed withal how he had offended God and mankind in not having labored at his art as he ought to have done. Whereupon he was seized with a paroxysm, the messenger of death, by reason of which the king having risen, and having taken his head, in order to aid him and show him favor, in the hope of

alleviating his sufferings, his divine spirit, knowing that it could have no greater honor, expired in the arms of the king, in the seventy-fifth year of his age." (More accurate chronicles as we have said, fix his age at sixty-seven.)

Needless to observe, this accomplished man had his defects, some of which were the faults of his time, others his personal shortcomings. Thus he is accused of being deficient in patriotism, and it is alleged against him that he was military engineer for the terrible Cesare Borgia. Doubt has been thrown too upon the authorship of some of the paintings ascribed to him. In so rapid and fragmentary a sketch as this necessarily must be we cannot go into the details of these discussions. One may find them drawn out at length in the many volumes which have been written concerning Leonardo.

Thus then, on the second of May, 1519, more than four hundred years ago, died Leonardo da Vinci, painter, sculptor, poet, musician, architect, mechanic, engineer, anatomist, philosopher and Christian man, who did great deeds with noble grace and verified in his life that saying of the poet concerning the men of the Ages of Faith:

"They went about their greatest deeds
Like noble boys at play."



SELF-PORTRAIT OF RAPHAEL
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

RAPHAEL



VEN VASARI, that chatty and gossiping chronicler of the great painters of the Renaissance, himself the Herodotus of painters, who has preserved for us so many true or well-imagined details of their lives, even he can find but little to tell of the life of Raphael Santi and, like most of his commentators, has to content himself with a description of Raphael's paintings, their origin and their history. Indeed the career of this consummate artist, this painter of Madonnas which surpass in heavenly beauty what one would have believed to be possible to mortal brush and color mixed by man, was so brief and so sudden in its glory that it is no wonder so few details of it have been preserved to posterity. This singular genius contrived to achieve all his triumphs of artistic expression, to pass through the stages of his development, from the time when he was but a copyist of Timotheo Vito and of Perugino to the day when he surpassed even his later models, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, in the brief space of less than two score years.

Vasari begins his life of Raphael with this striking passage, often copied by subsequent authors:

"The large and liberal hand wherewith Heaven is sometimes pleased to accumulate the infinite riches of its treasures on the head of one sole favorite, showering on him all those rare gifts and graces which are more commonly distributed among a large number of individuals, and accorded at long intervals of time only, has been clearly exemplified in the well-known instance of Raphael Sanzio of Urbino. (Note: Raphael is the given name, Santi the family name of the master. Sanzio seems to be an erroneous reading.)

"No less excellent than graceful, he was endowed by nature with all that modesty and goodness which may occasionally be perceived in those few favored persons who enhance the gracious sweetness of a disposition more than usually gentle, by the fair



THE MADONNA OF THE CURTAIN
In the Pinakothek, Munich

ornament of a winning amenity, always ready to conciliate, and constantly giving evidence of the most refined consideration for all persons and under every circumstance. The world received the gift of this artist from the hand of Nature when, vanquished by art in the person of Michelangelo, she deigned to be subjugated in that of Raphael, not by art only but by goodness also. And of a truth, since the greater number of artists had up to that period derived from Nature a certain rudeness and eccentricity which not only rendered them uncouth and fantastic, but often caused the shadows and darkness of vice to be more conspicuous in their lives than the light and splendor of those virtues by which man is rendered immortal, so was there good cause wherefore she should, on the contrary, make all the rarest qualities of the heart to shine resplendently in her Raphael, perfecting them by so much diffidence, grace, application to study, and excellence of life, that these alone would have sufficed to veil or neutralize every fault, however important, and to efface all defects, however glaring they might have been."

Vasari goes on to sketch the few details which are known of Raphael's childhood. "Raphael was born at Urbino, a most renowned city of Italy, on Good Friday of the year 1483, at three o'clock of the night. His father was a certain Giovanni Sanzio, a painter of no great eminence in his art, but a man of sufficient intelligence nevertheless, and perfectly competent to direct his children into that good way which had not, for his misfortune, been laid open to himself in his younger days. And first, as he knew how important it is that a child should be nourished by the milk of its own mother, and not by that of the hired nurse, so he determined when his son Raphael (to whom he gave that name at his baptism, as being one of good augury) was born to him, that the mother of the child, he having no other, as indeed he never had more, should herself be the nurse of the child.

"Giovanni further desired that in his tender years the boy should rather be brought up to the habits of his own family, and beneath his paternal roof, than be sent where he must acquire



THE ANSIDEI MADONNA
In the National Gallery, London

habits and manners less refined, and modes of thought less commendable, in the houses of the peasantry or other untaught persons. As the child became older Giovanni began to instruct him in the first principles of painting, perceiving that he was much inclined to that art, and finding him to be endowed with a most admirable genius. Few years had passed therefore before Raphael, though still but a child, became a valuable assistant to his father in the numerous works which the latter executed in the State of Urbino. At length this good and affectionate parent, knowing that his son would acquire but little of his art from himself, resolved to place him with Pietro Perugino, who, according to what Giovanni had been told, was then considered to hold the first place among the painters of the time." (Louis Gillet declares, however, that he could not have entered Perugino's studio before 1500.)

✱ Even the greatest of geniuses must begin their art by imitation, and so it was even with Raphael Santi. So perfectly did he copy his master Pietro Perugino, that as Vasari further says: "It is a well-known fact that while studying the manner of Pietro Raphael imitated it so exactly at all points that his copies cannot be distinguished from the original works of the master, nor can the difference between the performances of Raphael and those of Pietro be discerned with any certainty. This is proved clearly by certain figures still to be seen in Perugia, and which the former executed in a picture painted in oil in the Church of San Francesco, for *Madonna Maddalena degl' Oddi*."

Let us follow the old historian's account of the master's progress: "After the completion of this picture Pietro repaired for certain of his occasions to Florence, when Raphael departed from Perugia and proceeded with several of his friends to Citta di Castello, where he painted a picture in the same manner, for the Church of Sant' Agostino, with one representing the crucified Savior for that of San Domenico; which last, if it were not for the name of Raphael written upon it, would be supposed by every one to be a work of Pietro Perugino. For the Church of San Francisco in the same city he painted a small picture representing the espousals of



THE SAVIOR
In the Pinacotheca, Brescia

Our Lady, and in this work the progress of excellence may be distinctly traced in the manner of Raphael, which is here much refined, and greatly surpasses that of Pietro. In the painting here in question there is a church drawn in perspective with so much care that one cannot but feel amazed at the difficulty of the problem which the artist has set himself to solve.

“While Raphael was thus acquiring the greatest fame by the pursuit of this manner, the painting of the library belonging to the Cathedral of Siena had been entrusted by Pope Pius III to Bernardino Pinturicchio, who was a friend of Raphael’s and, knowing him to be an excellent designer, took the latter with him to Siena. Here Raphael made Pinturicchio certain of the designs and cartoons for that work, nor would the young artist have failed to continue there but for the reports which had reached him concerning Leonardo da Vinci, of whose merits he heard many painters of Siena speak in terms of the highest praise. They more especially celebrated the cartoon which Leonardo had prepared in the Sala del Papa, at Florence, for a most beautiful group of horses which was to be executed for the Great Hall of the Palace. They likewise mentioned another cartoon, representing nude figures, and made by Michelangelo Buonarroti, in competition with Leonardo, whom he had on that occasion greatly surpassed. These discourses awakened in Raphael so ardent a desire to behold the works thus commended, that, moved by the love he ever bore to excellence in art, and setting aside all thought of his own interest or convenience, he at once proceeded to Florence.”

His visit to Florence, with its wealth of artistic influences, marks a new stage in the master’s progress in his art. “In Florence, more than in any other city, men become perfect in all the arts, especially in that of painting. There the fine air makes men naturally quick to praise and blame, prompt to see what is good and beautiful, unwilling to tolerate mediocrity. The keen struggle for life sharpens the wits, and the love of glory is stirred in the hearts of men of every profession.” “Such,” says Cartwright, “according to Vasari, were the words in which Perugino’s old



THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN
In the Vatican Pinacotheca, Rome

Umbrian master urged him to seek his fortunes in Florence." The same author goes on to describe the effect which a visit to that great city must have had upon the impressionable youth.

"The moment was a memorable one. Never, even in the Magnifico Lorenzo's days, had so brilliant a company of artists met together within the city walls as that which assembled in January, 1504, to decide on the site of Michelangelo's David. Among the architects present on that occasion were Cronaca and the brothers Sangallo; among the sculptors, Andrea della Robbia and Sansovino; among the painters, Cosimo Roselli, Sandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Piero di Cosimo, Lorenzo di Credi, Pietro Perugino, and Leonardo da Vinci. All of these were still living when Raphael came to Florence, with the single exception of Filippino, who had died of an acute attack of angina pectoris on the 18th day of April, leaving his Deposition for the church of the Servi Brothers to be finished by Perugino. The presence of so many illustrious masters naturally provoked that generous spirit of rivalry which, Vasari assures us, was generated by the pure air of Florence."

The four years which Raphael spent in Florence marked a new period in his development as a painter. Says Louis Gillet in the Catholic Encyclopedia: "In the stimulating atmosphere of a perpetual contest dominated by an impassioned love of beauty and fame Raphael found fresh incentive. The knowledge and skill of the least of the Florentine painters were calculated to amaze the young provincial and sharpen his ideas, which proved most profitable to his talent. At Florence he began his education over again; he resumed his studies, and in a few years learned more about form than he had acquired from Timoteo and Perugino."

It was in Florence that Raphael began that series of great Madonnas which make the Church his debtor for all time. These marvelous compositions so extraordinary in their beauty, so human in their appeal, are the summit of popular devotional art. If Raphael's name is great in the history of painting, it is through his Madonnas that he has captured the heart of humanity. Multiplied by every process known to modern ingenuity, copied and recopied many thousand times by admiring painters, the Madonnas of



THE "COWPER" MADONNA
In the Collection of Mr. Joseph E. Widener, Philadelphia

Raphael adorn the walls of the great and the lowly, and the lineaments of these incarnations of motherliness and of virginity, of divine beauty and human appeal, are as familiar to a vast portion of mankind as the features of their own mothers. The Madonna of the Chair, the Madonna Granduca, La Belle Jardinière, the Sistine Madonna, are among the most popular as well as the most famous of human paintings.

The Madonnas which Raphael painted while he was in Florence form a group by themselves, and they have been divided, according to Louis Gillet, into three classes according to the nature of the composition. The first are the most simple, those which depict the Blessed Virgin with the features of a young Italian woman pictured at half length and holding the Christ Child in her arms. The greatest exemplar of this class is the Madonna of the Grand Duke, preserved in the Pitti Palace at Florence. This is said to be the first picture that Raphael painted in Florence. "With what ease," say Crowe and Cavalcaselle, "the Boy sits on the Virgin's hand; how prettily twisted the sash around His body! How safe He feels as He leans against His mother's bosom!"

This picture has an interesting history. It was painted on wood, like almost all of Raphael's Madonnas, and was called the Madonna of the Grand Duke because it formerly belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand III. It is sometimes called also the Madonna del Viaggio, which means the Madonna of the Journey, because wherever Ferdinand went he carried it with him. It once was the property of Carlo Dolci, and towards the end of the eighteenth century it had somehow come into the possession of a poor widow, who sold it, though it was in a perfect state, to a picture dealer for only twelve crowns, about twenty dollars of our money!

The second class of Raphael's Florentine Madonnas introduces into this simple form of composition some new elements, such as landscape or interior decoration. An example of this style is the Cowper Madonna which, Morelli says, (perhaps not many agree with him in the remark) is perhaps the loveliest of all of Raphael's Madonnas. This was formerly in Panshanger, England, having

been purchased by Lord Cowper, when he was British Minister to Florence, from the Nicolini family. It is now in the Widener collection, Philadelphia. On the border of the Virgin's dress near her throat are the letters: MDVII. R. U. Pin.

The third group of Madonnas shows a type of composition and style which mark a distinct advance in composition, a sense of balance and a more complex harmony. An excellent example of this group is *La Belle Jardinière*. This beautiful picture is now in the Louvre, as it was purchased by Francis I of France, from Filippo Sergardi, who had ordered it from Raphael. "The movements," says Muntz, "of this picture are combined with such perfection that one does not even think of the difficulties overcome. The most beautiful groups of antique statuary are not composed with greater suppleness or science."

X . But it was in Rome that Raphael was to reach the greatest height of his sublime art, and Rome too was to see the supreme achievements of his genius in painting the Madonna. In Florence he had been only a rather obscure young artist with a good future. He had but a few acquaintances and received a limited number of commissions. When he was summoned to Rome by Julius II, who was just having the Vatican repainted and redecorated, the glorious but too brief summer of his art began. "The twelve years of Raphael's life in Rome are unparalleled," says Gillet. "In this short space of time the young master multiplied masterpieces and left behind him the most complete, serene, and harmonious expression of the Renaissance. The painter of the Madonnas and of the little pictures of the Florentine period underwent the most surprising transformation, becoming all at once a most productive decorative painter on a vast scale.

"His genius set itself to the most exalted as well as the most diverse tasks, his inexhaustible resources permitting him to conceive of and complete within a few years the stanze or chambers of the Vatican, the 'Acts of the Apostles,' the Farnesina, and the Loggie, not to mention other undertakings as architect, archeologist, and sculptor, and fifty pictures or portraits, nearly all of which are masterpieces. It is a metamorphosis without precedent or



ESPOUSALS OF THE VIRGIN
In the Brera, Milan

explanation. When we consider that this vast and immortal work was accomplished in less than twelve years by a young man who was twenty-six when he began and who died at thirty-seven, we must question whether the world has twice beheld the wonder of such a genius."

Raphael's chief work in Rome was done at the direct order of Pope Julius II and of Pope Leo X, his successor, who proved himself a no less magnificent patron of his art. The vast compositions of the Stanza della Segnatura, which include those incomparable paintings the Disputa and The School of Athens, the decorations of the Stanza of Herodotus, of the Farnesina and of the baths of Cardinal Bibbiena engrossed much of the time of the young master, who had besides become the center of a great school of painters. He was moreover made not only painter to His Holiness but architect of St. Peter's, "the grandest church in the world." How vast were his preoccupations can be imagined from the circumstance that he was ever ready, in addition to his own great labors, to help his numerous friends. Besides, he was immensely interested in Roman antiquities and was engaged in an exhaustive study of them. Indeed, it was this tremendous press of work which probably caused his death.

Says Cartwright of the work of those last years. "A whole school of architects and painters, of sculptors, engravers, mosaic workers, wood-carvers and gilders had sprung up under the influence of his genius, and were employed in building and decorating churches, palaces, and villas, under his direction. And perfect harmony, Vasari tells us, reigned in that vast body of artists, who one and all adored him as a teacher and loved him as a father. Never before had Rome, the capital of Christendom, witnessed so splendid a burst of artistic activity. And no painter before had ever attained so high a degree of honor and renown. The death of Bramante, the absence of Michelangelo, had left him without a rival, both in the Pope's favor and in the popular estimation. He lived, we are told by Vasari, not as a painter but as a prince, and fifty scholars accompanied him daily from his house to the Vatican.



ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA
In the National Gallery, London

'You walk as a general at the head of an army,' was the significant remark with which Michelangelo one day greeted him. 'And, you,' replied Raphael gaily, 'as an executioner on his way to the scaffold.' The words are a curious illustration of the contrast that marked the character and habits, as well as the genius, of the two men."

Yet in the midst of all these preoccupations Raphael still found time to paint his beloved Madonnas, and reached in them the summit of artistic perfection in delineating human loveliness and heavenly sanctity. Perhaps the most famous of his Roman Madonnas are the two entitled *The Sistine Madonna* and *The Madonna of the Chair*. "The Madonna of the Chair," says Gillet, "is perhaps the best liked by women. No other links so happily the familiar charm of the Florentine period with the maturity of the Roman period. She is only a peasant in the costume of a *contadina*, with the national kerchief on her hair; but Raphael never found in such simple materials a more profound and natural combination of forms, such curving lines, such an expressive, enfolding arabesque. The whole of maternal love seems to be enclosed within the perfect circle of this picture. It is the perfection of *genre* pictures, wherein the most ordinary human life reaches its noblest expression, a universal beauty. Art has lived for four centuries on this sublime idea. Though from Giulio Romano to Ingres it has been imitated a thousand times, no one has discovered the secret of its perfection." It is said by Karoly that this is the most popular picture by Raphael and that no other work of art is so well known. There is a charming legend connected with its origin, which is given by Mrs. Clement in these words:

"The pretty and poetical legend of this famous picture relates that centuries ago there dwelt among the Italian hills near Rome a venerable hermit, whom the people called Father Bernardo. During a terrible storm his life was saved by Mary, the beautiful daughter of a wine dresser, and by an old oak tree in whose branches he had taken refuge; so he prayed to God to distinguish them in some way. Years passed away, the hermit died, and the oak tree was converted into casks for Mary's father. One day



THE MADONNA OF THE CHAIR
In the Pitti Palace, Florence

Mary was sitting by one of these casks playing with her children, the elder of whom ran towards her with a stick made into the shape of a cross. Raphael had long been seeking a model for a picture of the Virgin and Child. Just then he passed by, and seeing the group, stopped and drew them on the smooth cover of the wine cask. This he took away with him, and on it painted the Madonna della Sedia. Thus was the blessing and desire of the old hermit realized, and Mary and the oak were distinguished for all time."

Many a visitor to the Pitti Gallery in Florence has hurried through the other great rooms with their priceless treasures to come to that farthest one where is preserved the Madonna della Sedia. Familiar to them from childhood, in copies and prints, they crave to look upon the original of this heavenly picture and to see it as the master's hand has left it, a vision of motherly beauty, priceless and immortal. We ourselves, on a bright morning at Florence followed this good tradition and stood and gazed upon the famous picture. As always there was a copyist at work before it. Comparing the original even with that good reproduction one saw how much such a picture loses in a copy. The most faithful notion of it is had, perhaps, from a good photograph, skilfully colored.

The Sistine Madonna is thought by many to be the greatest of all pictures. At least we may agree with Gillet when he says: "Here the artist directly attempts the expression of the supernatural. The Dresden picture is the most beautiful devotional picture in existence. The impression is obtained not only by the idealism of its form but by the visionlike representation of space, by the scheme of clouds on which the Virgin is upheld, and the solemnity of the drapery. An almost forbidding mystery fills this majestic canvas, truly unequalled in Raphael's work." This was the last Madonna that Raphael painted, in 1519, one year before his death. Contrary to his custom, he painted this on canvas of very fine texture. It was done for the monks of the monastery of San Sisto for the high altar of their church at Piacenza. A pretty legend, which, however, seems unfortunately not authentic, tells that the idea of the two little angels at the base of the picture, who



THE SISTINE MADONNA
In the Dresden Gallery



THE DEPOSITION FROM THE CROSS
In the Villa Borghese, Rome

gaze upwards with such intent and infantile gravity, were suggested to Raphael by the sight of two little boys who had climbed up to one of the windows of his studio and were watching him as he worked, with a gaze like that of these cherubs.

"No words," say Crowe and Cavalcaselle, "however subtle they may be, can do justice to Raphael's Madonna of St. Sixtus. . . . Above all there is beauty and fitness in the contrast between the age of Sixtus and the youth of Santa Barbara, and the pitting of the human semblances with the supernatural air of Christ or the lofty dignity of Mary, whose contour is faultless, whose brow is perfect, and whose eyes, like those of her divine Son, reflect an eternity of unutterable fondness.

"This masterpiece by Raphael has by many critics been regarded as the first painting in the world. In force and sentiment, as an altar piece, and in the ease and harmony of its composition, this work has hardly an equal; whilst in the dignity and grandeur of the Divine Mother, no work can be compared with it. The peculiar 'divine' expression of the Madonna's face is due in part to an exaggerated breadth between the eyes, and partly to the peculiar nonfocussing of the eyes, by which they are made to look at no particular point, but into indefinite distance."

We shall never forget the moments spent in the great Pinakothek at Dresden before the Sistine Madonna. It is kept in a chamber by itself. The lighting is from the right of the picture. A long bench or lounge is placed in front for the convenience of visitors and all day long a continuous procession of lovers of art come, and sit silently gazing at this celestial painting. Sometimes the crowd of gazers is so great that one person obstructs the view of the other.

At first some visitors are disappointed with the picture. The colors are not so fresh and beautiful as in others of Raphael's Madonnas. But when one looks at the face of the Virgin, (such at least was the present writer's experience), he seems no longer to be gazing at a picture but to behold a heavenly vision. The form of the Blessed Virgin seems to float in space, detached from the canvas. Her garments are moved by the very airs of heaven. That

lovely countenance, so full of feeling and sweetness, those wonderful eyes, which seem always to gaze on the beholder, appear to live and one waits with breathless awe to hear the Virgin speak. The Divine Infant in her arms seems also rather a celestial apparition than the work of human art. His limbs rest in the secure support of His Mother's arms with a repose that seems full of living power and one would not be astounded if He raised His tiny hand in blessing.

The other figures, though charming, we found inferior to those of Mother and Child. The little cherubs with their adoring looks, the venerable gentleness of Pope St. Sixtus who gazes at the Madonna and points with his right hand toward the beholder as if in intercession, the lovely modesty of St. Barbara, seemed to us almost to vanish away as we looked at the countenance of the Virgin and experienced that extraordinary sensation of beholding not so much a painted image as a living reality.

Raphael had condensed a whole lifetime in the brief space of two score years, and he was to pay the penalty of his sudden successes. One can imagine under what terrific strain he had lived in Rome from this passage from Cartwright: "On the one hand there was the Pope urging him to design frescoes for the next stanza, wall paintings for his hunting-box at La Magliana, and a new series of tapestries for the Sistine. One day he is called from his work to design a medal in honor of Lorenzo's wedding; another he must paint the elephant presented to the Pope by the King of Portugal." "The elephant's portrait was actually painted, probably by Giulio Romano, although the inscription placed on the Vatican walls stated that it was the work of Raphael." And all the while the decoration of the Vatican Loggie and the works of St. Peter's were being carried on under his superintendence.

On the other hand, there were the cardinals all clamoring for pictures, Giulio de Medici asking, not only for his altar piece but for plans for the sumptuous villa that he was building on the slopes of Monte Mario, and Leo's nephew, Cardinal Cibo, seeking his help in the theatrical performances with which he amused the Pope on Sunday evenings. The Duke of Ferrara's envoy, Paulucci, has left



THE TRANSFIGURATION
In the Vatican Pinacotheca, Rome



THE DISPUTA OF THE EUCHARIST
In the Vatican Palace, Rome



CHRIST, DETAIL FROM THE DISPUTA OF THE EUCHARIST
In the Vatican Palace, Rome

us a lively description of the night when Ariosto's *Suppositi* was performed, and he saw the Holy Father put up his glasses to examine the beautiful scenery painted by Raphael. In the midst of this bewildering diversity of engagements Raphael set to work on an undertaking which would, in the eyes of most men, have been enough to fill a whole lifetime. This was nothing less than a systematic survey of ancient Rome, illustrated with drawings of all the principal monuments. With the help of the learned humanist Andreas Fulvius he explored the first of the fourteen regions into which the city was to be divided, taking exact measurements of all the buildings with the newly discovered compass, and making drawings of temples and baths that were no longer in existence, from the descriptions of classical writers."

It was no marvel, under the stress of all this work, that Raphael's health gave way and that a sudden death extinguished this light of painters. "On the 24th," says Cartwright, "he signed a contract with the canons of St. Peter for the purchase of a plot of land for building purposes. Three days after that he fell ill of a fever, brought on, it has been sometimes said, by his archeological excursions in the malarial quarters of the city, or else, as others tell us, the result of a chill caught by waiting in a hall of the Vatican, after hurrying from Chigi's villa in obedience to a summons from the Pope. Whatever the cause of illness may have been, he had no strength to resist the attack. That unwonted melancholy which Paulucci had noticed some months before was a sign that his health was giving way under the prolonged strain to which it had been exposed. He sank rapidly, worn out in body and mind. But he retained sufficient consciousness to make his will, and appointed two of the chief officials of the Pope's household, Brancantonio dell' Aquila and Baldassarre Turini, to be his executors.

He gave directions for his burial in the Pantheon, left a thousand ducats to endow a sepulchral chapel, and a sum of three hundred ducats to each of his servants. The bulk of his property, valued at sixteen thousand ducats, was left to his relatives at Urbino, and all his unfinished works of art to his pupils Giulio Romano and Francesco Penni. At nine o'clock, on the evening of Good



THE COLONNA MADONNA
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Friday, the 6th of April, he breathed his last, having exactly completed his thirty-eighth year. His scholars, feeling in their bitter grief like children suddenly bereft of a father, placed the unfinished Transfiguration at the head of the bed where their master lay in his last sleep. There the crowds who came to look once more on the face of Raphael saw him with his great picture at his side, and broke into tears and sobs at the mournful contrast between the dead man and living forms that his hand had fashioned. The next day all the artists in Rome, followed by a great concourse of people, bore him to the grave which he had chosen for himself, before the altar of Our Lady, under the dome of the Pantheon. Court and city alike were plunged into mourning, and there was a general feeling of consternation and dismay. The Pope himself wept bitterly."

Thus ended the brief career which for its sudden brilliance outshines all else that the history of art has recorded. He died a faithful son of the Church. He left a fund to insure an annual mass for the repose of his soul, and for a hundred and fifty-eight years it was faithfully celebrated. The glory of his Madonnas has adorned the homes of the lowly and the great in countless replicas during all the centuries which have followed his decease. The chorus of lamentation which greeted the news of his untimely death has been changed to a constant succession of praises from the lips of every generation. It is true that the pre-Raphaelites have broken the uninterrupted encomiums of three centuries, but despite their criticisms the greatness of Raphael's genius remains established for all ages. "In his life and in his work," says Cartwright, "in his ardor for knowledge and his passion for antiquity, in his belief in the power of culture to sweeten and elevate humanity; above all, in his instinctive love of beauty and in the large serenity of his art, Raphael represents the best and highest aims of the Renaissance. For once the ideal of Plato was realized, and in him the world saw an artist whose own beautiful and gracious nature was in perfect harmony with his dreams, whose creations, 'like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, draw the soul insensibly into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.' "

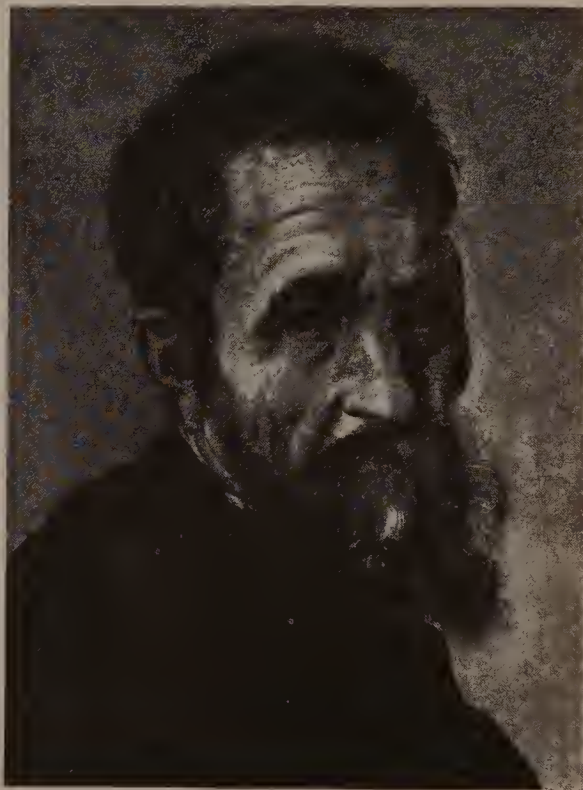


HOLY FAMILY "THE PEARL"
In the Prado, Madrid

MICHELANGELO



ONE of the many biographers who have dealt with the life of Michelangelo has the grace to prefix to his volume the following observation: "The life," he says, "of a man who began serious work at the age when most men are still children, whose activity was continuous for some ninety years until the stroke of death fell upon him, and who was at once a sculptor, painter, architect, engineer and poet, cannot be handled



SELF-PORTRAIT OF MICHELANGELO

with any completeness within the limits of one short volume." If it is true, and it is sadly true, that it has been impossible even within the capacious covers of books rightly to depict this stormy, glorious and tragic life of ninety years, still less is it possible to do justice to the solitary and mighty figure of Michelangelo within the compass of these few pages. Yet one can put into brief words something of the glory and strife of his long, intense, bitter and yet triumphant days.

It was in the remote, quiet little place called Caprese, a mere huddle of vineyards, near the watershed that divides the headwaters of the Tiber, the river of Rome, from those of the Arno, the river of Florence, that there was born, on the sixth day of March, 1475, to one Lodovico Buonarotti Simoni and his wife Francesca di Neri di Miniato del Sera a son to whom his father with unconscious appropriateness gave the name Michelangelo, after the great archangel. It was not without prophetic meaning that this lofty spirit was named after an archangel, nor, as one biographer observes, was it without significance that the man who was destined to be great and to carry copious floods of art and of glory both to Rome and to Florence should take his origin just at the spot where rise the two rivers which flow down, the one to the city of the Caesars, the other to fair Florence, the jewel of Tuscany.

The baby thus happily named Michelangelo was given to nurse to the wife of a stonecutter at Settignano, a town which for centuries was the home of a race of stonecutters and where even to this day one hears through the lonely streets the constant clattering of hammers and tap-tap of chisels. Many years afterwards Michelangelo said jestingly to his great friend Georgio Vasari, the chronicler of the painters of the Renaissance, "If I have anything good in my disposition it comes from my being born in the subtle air of your district of Arezzo; just as also I drew in with the milk of my foster mother the chisel and the mortar that I make my figures with." Whatever the reason, Michelangelo very early showed his strong bent for art. His father had meant him to be a merchant in silk or in wool like his brothers, but one of his schoolmates, Francesco Granacci, had colors and canvas to give him, and those two together, little lads as they were, began to draw and to paint at an age when most boys are busy with toys and trifles.

At last his father, overcome by his son's persistence, put him with Domenico di Ghirlandaio, then the best master in Florence. The boy was thirteen years and one month old when he was apprenticed, and he was to stay with his master three years and learn to paint pictures. But it was not in painting that Michelangelo

preferred to express the mighty forms of art which were even then beginning to shape themselves in his mental vision. All his life long he called himself a sculptor, and it was only at the imperative insistence of popes and princes that he let himself, with many complaints and groanings, be turned aside to the vast works in painting and architecture which took up so many of his long and toilsome years. It is the fashion with authors who write of Michelangelo to emphasize the tyrannous insistence with which one pope after another turned aside the course of his genius, now to painting the vast frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, now to designing the huge cupola of St. Peter's. Doubtless too, Michelangelo himself thought their persistence no little hardship, and his complaint continues to echo loud enough down the ages. But the truth is that future generations have some cause to thank these insistent pontiffs. For what conjectural achievements would we exchange the real and remarkable beauties of the Sistine Chapel, or what statues that the master might have tried would repay us for the loss of that mighty dome which crowns and guards the Eternal City?

Still it is true that Michelangelo chose to be above all things a sculptor, and despite the insistence of the pontiffs a sculptor he remained until the end. When he was an old and wearied man, his days all ebbed out and his course nearly completed, he would rouse himself of a sleepless night and go from his couch to strike at the marble of some unfinished statue, more for the sake of satisfying the constant craving of his craftsman's hand than for any need he had to make new statues. In the old man of ninety still dwelt that love for the shaping of white marble which he had got as he himself declares, in the days of his childhood.

Lorenzo di Medici, the father of Pope Leo X who was afterwards to be Michelangelo's patron, had in his gardens at San Marco a school for young sculptors. Lorenzo sent to all the leading teachers of art in Florence and asked them to bring to the gardens their most promising pupils; and thither went Michelangelo. It was then that he was introduced to the table of Lorenzo himself and to that cultured circle of the Renaissance which included such

men as Poliziano, the great classicist, Pico della Mirandola and the rest who came from time to time to dine with Lorenzo the Magnificent. The incident that gained for Michelangelo a place in Lorenzo's household is thus described by Vasari. Lorenzo once met the lad, eagerly carrying the head of a faun which he had set himself to copy and adapt from a battered antique in the gardens. Lorenzo looked at the mask with interest, but laughed loud and long to see that the faun had all his teeth. "Do you not know," he said, "that old folk like this are likely to be minus a tooth or two?"

No sooner was his back turned than Michelangelo seized his chisel again, and knocked out a tooth here and a tooth there, hollowing out the gums so that the faun put on the appearance of old age. Pleased with the quickness of the boy, Lorenzo the Magnificent sent for Michelangelo's father and offered to take the son into his own house, where he sat daily at table with Lorenzo's three sons, one of whom was the future Leo X, and with many others whose names were great in literature or in art and who came in from time to time to share the hospitality of Lorenzo.

It was then but forty years since John Gutenberg had invented printing, but already there were many printed books in the palace of Lorenzo. There Michelangelo began that knowledge of the poetry of Dante which later in life gained for him the repute of being one of the greatest students of Dante of his time. There too he gained that great love of the Holy Scriptures which, Vasari says, was with him to the end, and there too he heard for the first time the fame of Savonarola, whose preaching and doings were beginning to stir his Florence to the depths.

For five years the boy remained at the Palazzo Medici and toiled at his art. In the meantime, like the other young artists of the day, he worked at the frescoes of Masaccio in the Carmine church. It was there that Torrigiano, a great, brutal fellow who was likewise studying art, became so incensed at the banterings and teasings of Michelangelo that at the end, as he told Cellini, he gave Michelangelo a smashing blow full in the face, which broke his nose. "I could feel the cartilage give way under my fists," said

Torrigiano; and the mark of his savage blow was on the face of Michelangelo to his dying day.

It was at this time of his life, while he was still a student in the school of the Medici, that one hears of the first Madonna from the hands of Michelangelo. It is the little Madonna of the Stairs, a bas-relief now in the Casa Buonarrotti, showing the Blessed Mother seated and looking to the left, while she holds the child on her left arm. At the side of the composition are several figures on a stair, which give the Madonna its name. In the great beauty and dignity of this work of Michelangelo, in the deep feeling which animates it, one sees some indications of the labor, the majesty and mystery of Michelangelo's later work. Vasari tells us that the composition was done by Michelangelo, "wishing to counterfeit the manner of Donatello," and that the relief once belonged to Leónardo, the sculptor's nephew.

On April 18, 1492, Lorenzo the Magnificent, patron of the arts and the tyrant of Florence, succumbed at last to death. Piero, his son and successor, was not as happy in his rule as had been his father. Two years of the rule of Piero brought calamity. Michelangelo saw the storm coming, and left Florence by night, only a few weeks before Piero and his brothers had to flee by the same gate. He has been accused of cowardice for this flight. But what could the lad have done if he had remained? After this prudent flight, for which no one can very much blame him, Michelangelo, with two companions, set out for Bologna, where they spent a year. It was there that, among other things, he carved the sturdy angel which is still part of the shrine of St. Dominic at Bologna.

At the end of this year Michelangelo returned to Florence. The times were troubled ones, the Medici had fallen. Charles VIII and his French troops had come and gone out of Florence but were still in Italy. Savonarola was at the height of his career and had three years yet of influence and of glory before he was burned in the Plaza. Michelangelo set himself to work at his art, undeterred by these stirring happenings. He received some important commissions. It was a French Cardinal, Jean de Groslaye of St. Denis,



THE PIETA
In St. Peter's, Rome

who gave Michelangelo after he had gone to Rome the order to carve the pietà which is in the chapel of the Madonna della Febbre at St. Peter's. The contract was signed August 27, 1498, and its terms have well been preserved for us. "The Maestro Michelangelo of Florence is to make at his own proper cost a pietà of marble, that is to say, a draped figure of the Virgin Mary with the dead Christ in her arms, the figures being life-size, for the sum of four hundred and fifty gold ducats in papal gold, to be finished within the term of one year from the beginning of the work."

We have reason to thank the Cardinal de Groslaye for his commission, which has given us one of the most beautiful and thoughtful and reverent of all the statues of the Madonna. This wonderful pietà, grave, majestic, restrained in composition, is an admirable rendering of the grief beyond words which filled the heart of the Mother of God when she held in her arms the lifeless body of that divine Son who was dearer to her than her own being. There is in this pietà none of the demonstrative sorrow which one sees in the earlier ones. In those former compositions the sculptors were wont to express the grief of the Blessed Mother in postures and expressions which were a true enough rendering of the customary expression of sorrow in southern women. But in the mute, restrained calm and depthless grief of the Blessed Mother as Michelangelo has carved her there is a pathos and a grief inexpressible. The Blessed Virgin is represented as a strong and youthful woman who easily bears upon her right arm the lifeless body of her Son. Her strong right hand which ministered to Him and supported Him from the tender days of Bethlehem is still capable to sustain His inert and drooping body.

Still mighty in her self-control and perfect resignation to the will of God, the Blessed Mother holds up with one hand the body of her Son and with the other makes a gesture full of resignation and of sweetness most majestic and most sorrowful. It is as though she were saying to the passers-by, "Attend and see if there is sorrow like unto my sorrow!" The whole execution of the statue is technically almost perfect, the marble has been brought to such a state of finish as perhaps no other statues by Michelangelo



THE PIETA—(DETAIL)
In St. Peter's, Rome

possess, except, it may be, his statue of Moses. The Body of Christ, beautifully modeled and proportioned, presents none of the rigidity or the horror of death. The great struggle is over. The Conqueror over death and sin has laid aside for a while His weary Body, and His Blessed Mother, holding that sacred Body on her arm, looks upon it with such an expression of grief and resignation as no other sculptor perhaps has ever given to marble. Many times, when entering or leaving St. Peter's we have been tempted to turn aside for a moment to gaze again upon this touching and beautiful masterpiece. It is in the chapel to the right as one enters the basilica, the same chapel which contains the curious twisted column said to have been brought from the Temple at Jerusalem.

The striking youth of the face of this Mother of Sorrows has been for centuries a subject of comment and of wonder. Even in Michelangelo's day the youthfulness of the Madonna of his *pietà* was criticised as strange and unusual. Condivi, one of the contemporary biographers of Michelangelo, says that the master himself explained his meaning in making the Madonna so youthful by declaring that the holy virtue of purity keeps those who are stainless fresh and young for longer than the rest of mankind. "How much more would this be the case," he continued, "with a virgin into whose bosom there never had come the least shadow of sin. Nay, I will go further and hazard the belief that this unsullied bloom of youth, besides being maintained in her by natural causes, may have been miraculously wrought by God to convince the world of the virginity and perpetual purity of His mother. It was not necessary for the Son of God to maintain this principle of perpetual youth. On the contrary, in order to prove that the Son of God took upon Himself, as in very truth He did take, a human body, and became subject to all that an ordinary man is subject to, with the exception of sin, the human nature of Christ, instead of being superseded by the divine, was left to the operation of natural laws, so that His person revealed the exact age to which He had attained. You need not, therefore, marvel if, having regard to these considerations, I made the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God much younger relatively to her Son than her time of life demanded."



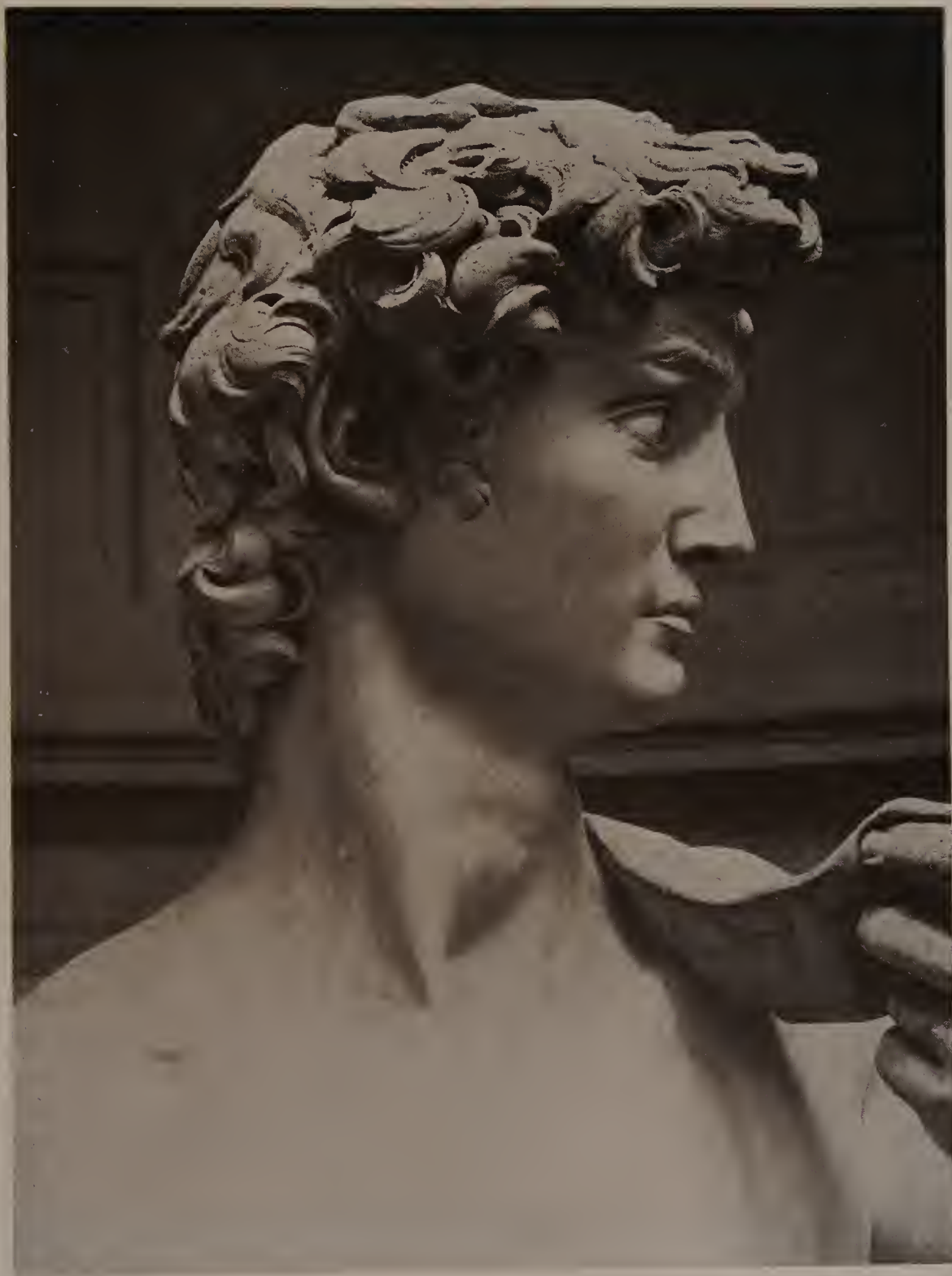
MOSES
In the Church of St. Peter in Chains, Rome

"This reasoning," adds Condivi, "was worthy of some learned theologian, and would have been little short of marvelous in most men, but not in him, whom God and Nature fashioned, not merely to be peerless in his handiwork, but also capable of the divinest concepts, as innumerable discourses and writings which we have of his make clearly manifest."

When this *pietà* was exhibited it lifted Michelangelo at once to the highest place among his fellow artists. Indeed he himself seems immensely to have wished that it should be linked with his name. The story goes that certain men from Lombardy, passing by the *pietà*, stopped to admire it. One of them told the other that this was the work of a certain sculptor of Milan, Solari, surnamed *Il Gobbo*. Michelangelo was standing near and happened to overhear them. Forthwith he shut himself up in the chapel and engraved on the belt which hangs from the shoulder of the Madonna his own name. He never did this with any of his other works.

One realizes the precocious quality of Michelangelo's genius from the circumstance that this splendid statue, unparalleled in the history of art, was begun by him in 1497, when he was but twenty-two years of age.

Michelangelo remained in Rome until 1501, spending nearly five years in that city. It may be that during the last years of his first stay in Rome he carved the marble Madonna of Notre Dame of Bruges. The most various opinions have been passed upon this creation. Some declare that it is wholly the work of Michelangelo, others that it must have been the task of his assistants. The Madonna is seated with her right hand upon her knee holding a book, her left entwined in that of the Blessed Child, who stands between her knees. The face of the Blessed Virgin is in dignified repose, after the type of the Madonna of the *pietà* in St. Peter's just described. She seems just to have finished reading to her divine Child and to have closed the book and to be looking far out into the distance. Her hands are beautiful, strong and fair, and the manner in which the hand of the Child is entwined in hers is a marvel of strength and gentleness. It is said that this statue is seen best from a distance. The remarkable bunch of folds in the garment



DAVID, DETAIL
In the Academy, Florence

near the Child's head upon the Virgin's left hand does not give up its meaning at once to the spectator. But when one goes off a short distance, "it is seen," says Gerald S. Davies in his book on Michelangelo, from which we have drawn most concerning the master, "that these folds act as a most important bit of shadow, to throw off in relief the head of the Child."

In 1501 Michelangelo left Rome for Florence, being now twenty-six years of age. He was at once overwhelmed with commissions. It was then that he was given the task of carving a colossal figure of David out of a block of marble which had lain for thirty-five years after an incompetent sculptor had tried to block out a statue from it. He began this work in the summer of 1501 and finished it only in January, 1504. The splendid figure, with its majestic pose and virile look, is full of heroic resistance and remarkable courage. It is the moment when David goes forth to battle against Goliath the Philistine. His left hand holds a sling and the right the pebble which is to strike down the giant. His brows are bent in resolution, and his eyes cast a scornful look toward the huge warrior whom he is to bring to the dust. The lips are curled with contempt. There is everywhere the strength of indomitable courage and fearless faith.

As we entered the vestibule of the Academia delle Belle Arte at Florence, the first to meet our gaze were those titanic figures by Michelangelo, half hewn from the stubborn marble, half buried still in their native stone which seem symbols of human art and achievement, struggling to free themselves from disorder and the entanglements of matter. A certain awe comes over the spirit as it contemplates these significant forms which embody so much more of meaning than they reveal to the casual glance. Then, passing by this half finished work of the master's chisel, we came suddenly upon that glorious and perfect figure, gigantic but harmonious, the David which we had seen so often in pictures and copies, but now looked on for the first time in the original. It is of so heroic a mould that one admires not only the graceful and strong proportions of that kingly form, but the courage of the sculptor who drew so great a work from so huge a mass of marble.



THE HOLY FAMILY
In the Uffizi, Florence

A replica of the statue stands far up on the hill near San Miniato and looks afar over Florence, a lordly form against the sky.

To this same period is ascribed the solitary picture in oils which, so far as is known, Michelangelo ever painted, since he was used to saying that "oil-painting is an art for children." In this very beautiful and unusual composition Michelangelo really sculptured in oils. The whole work is more a relief than a painting. It is a picture modeled with the brush. Tone and color are little attended to; there is no atmosphere. It is, as Davies has said, like a finely modeled drawing to which colors have been applied. Yet the picture fixes itself in the memory. The tenderness of the Blessed Virgin's gesture and the unusual grouping of the figures are quite remarkable and memorable. One sees, though, in the face of the Madonna how little Michelangelo cared for mere beauty and how much he attended to strength and meaning of expression.

The face of the Blessed Mother is not to be compared in loveliness with, for instance, the Madonnas of Raphael; yet the devoted tenderness with which she looks at the Infant Jesus and the expression on the face of St. Joseph with which he regards the divine Child are singularly beautiful and significant. It is a symphony of love, the love of the Infant who caresses His virginal Mother, the love of St. Joseph, bending over Him in protection, and the love of that devoted Virgin who leans back to embrace her Child with a gesture and look which speak most eloquently the entire consecration of her being. Thus it is, as one commentator has truly said, a picture which stands one of the highest tests that can be applied to painting. Once you have become really acquainted with this Madonna you can never forget it.

It is interesting to read of this picture that when it was ordered by one Agnolo Doni that unfortunate individual attempted to cheapen the price which Michelangelo was accustomed to ask for work of the kind. The testy master lost no time in punishing his foolish patron. He demanded more than twice the price which he usually asked, as punishment to Doni for trying to get it cheaply.

About this period also Michelangelo made two other tondi reliefs in marble, neither of them quite finished but both beautiful.

One of them was made for Bartolomeo Pitti and is now in the Bargello. In this group the Mother holds an open book toward the Child, who, as though weary, leans his elbow upon the book which rests on her knee. The Blessed Mother turns her head and looks out into the distance with the same calm, half-sorrowful look which marks nearly all of Michelangelo's Madonnas. One can still see the chisel marks of the master upon the unfinished stone, and his biographers are lost in conjecture why it is that these works of his were never brought to full completion. One reason is perhaps that he found it so hard to give to works like this the ideal completeness which was in his mind. One guesses here, as in some of da Vinci's works, the noble despair of a great mind whose vision was lovelier than his deed.

The other Madonna which is in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy at London shows the Infant leaning upon His mother's lap, while St. John holds out to Him a little bird, just indicated in the rough marble. The face of the Madonna is not so strong nor beautiful as that in the Bargello, and the figure of St. John is left in the rough.

These two works were perhaps still in Michelangelo's studio when a summons came from Pope Julius II to come once more to Rome. There he received the famous commission, which never was fully executed, to make a tomb for Julius II. This mighty pope, whose designs were all vast and whose ideas were ever large and spacious, had proposed to build for himself an immense tomb. Michelangelo kindled at once at the idea of this tremendous sarcophagus, and in three months from his arrival at Rome he was on his way to the quarries of Carrara to choose the marble for the tomb.

This sarcophagus was to be a cause of worry and regret to Michelangelo for many years. All on fire as he was with the great design, it was never completed, and the eight months that he spent in the quarries at Carrara were not only a woeful loss of time but a sad vexation to him. One can see the master's restless enthusiasm and vast designs in the circumstance that he half resolved to shape one of the great marble cliffs of Carrara into a huge colossus



CHRIST AND THE VIRGIN—(DETAIL OF THE LAST JUDGMENT)
In the Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome

of a statue like that one which the Greek sculptor in the days of Alexander had proposed to carve from Mt. Athos. But even the great tomb, which was to contain more than forty statues, was never executed. The Pontiff changed his mind and ordered Michelangelo first to make a cast of a vast bronze statue of Julius, which, though causing infinite trouble in its making, was broken up and destroyed within a few years by the enemies of the Pope. Then came the order for the decoration of the Sistine Chapel, which occupied four years. When it was thrown open in 1512 the great Pope Julius had but a few months to live, and he died without having seen the tomb which he had once desired.

It is very marvelous, the versatility of this enormous genius, who was as mighty in his wielding of the brush, which he liked not so well, as in his power with the chisel and mallet which were his first and most enduring love. In 1508, when he returned from Rome, the Pope, against his disclaimer that he was no painter but a sculptor and that his forte was not painting on the wet plaster of bare walls, insisted that he should undertake the painting of the Sistine Chapel, the famous one in the Vatican, so named after Pope Sixtus IV.

At length Michelangelo accepted, and on May 10, 1508, a great day indeed in the annals of art, he began the task. He was then just thirty-three years old, in the very prime of his power. What difficulties he met, how he was compelled to build a new scaffolding because the wooden stage erected for him by Bramante could not be used, how the first layer of color fell away and he had to find a new mixture which would hold, inexperienced as he was in the art of painting, how the workmen hired for him in Florence were incompetent and had to be discharged and the new ones who were employed were found wanting in their turn and had likewise to be driven away, how the master finally determined to finish the work by himself and shut himself up in the chapel, toiling in obscurity while the Pope kept urging him to make an end; all these things belong to the history of art. The Pope kept asking him again and again: "When will you finish?" only to be given the same answer, "When I am able."

But at last, in the late days of December of 1512, the vault of the Sistine was finished and the great scaffolding cleared away, and all Rome rang with the wonder of it. The Pope who, though he knew it not, had now only a few months to live, was in admiration. A new chapter had been written in the history of art, and what is one of the most magnificent of all human achievements, perhaps even the most gigantic work ever done in such space by the hand of a man, was given to the admiration of centuries. "It is so stupendous an achievement," says Knapp, "that it is impossible to find even a comparison with it. Neither in the ancient world nor in the Renaissance do we find anything to equal it. It is a departure in execution from anything that has hitherto been accomplished. It is filled with Michelangelo's feelings for the plastic and betrays no hint of striving after effect by means of optic illusion. It is not intended to be seen from one position. Figures stand isolated against figures, each independent in itself." Space will not serve us to treat in detail of this gigantic work. Neither can we do more than mention in passing that other marvel of the creative art, the Last Judgment, which is painted on the wall of the Sistine Chapel above the altar.

When Pope Clement lay dying, he had determined to decorate the end wall of the Sistine Chapel with the great fresco of the Last Judgment. When Alexander Farnese became Pope, under the name of Paul III, he instantly confirmed this command, and the great master set to work on another immortal creation. It was thirty years since the scaffolding had been removed from the Sistine Chapel. There were three frescoes of Perugino on the wall which it was necessary to destroy, and two large windows had to be filled in and the wall prepared for frescoes. But all these things were done, and Michelangelo began again to work in that chapel which his genius was to make immortal in the history of art. This tremendous composition took from six to seven years to finish and is once more unique in its own sphere. We shall only dwell on one detail, that picture of the Madonna where Michelangelo has put her at the right hand of her divine Son. Beneath His right arm, uplifted in judgment, she turns aside her face with a gesture of hu-



THE CREATION OF THE SUN AND THE MOON—(DETAIL OF PAINTING)
In the Sistine Chapel, Rome

mility and petition. While the tremendous and majestic figure of Christ is the center of the whole composition and dominates it with immense power, the figure of His Blessed Mother in grace and humility is subdued beside that of her divine Son. Even at this awful moment of judgment she seems to typify mercy, humility and compassion. Her motherly pity and tenderness set off the majestic justice and power expressed in the mighty figure of her divine Son. The Last Judgment was given to view on December 25, 1541.

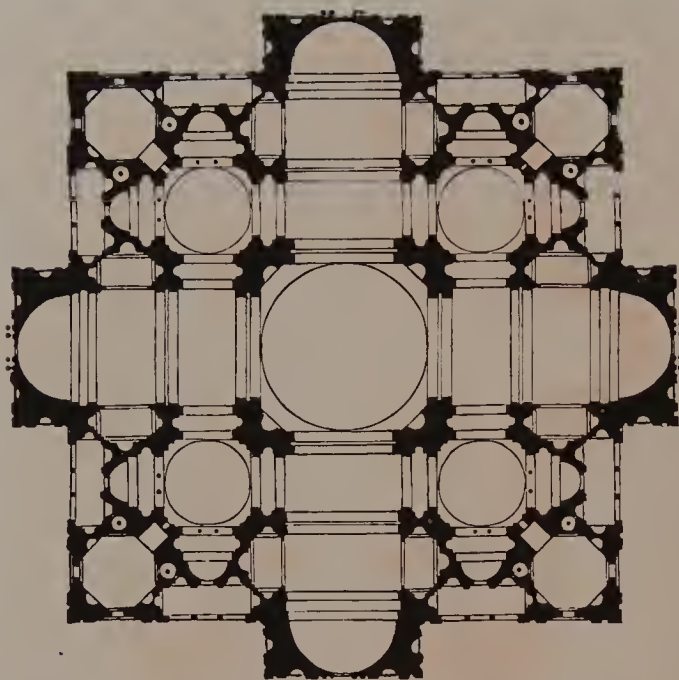
Of all the places in Rome which draw the art-loving pilgrim to visit and revisit them, few are more potent in their attraction than this Sistine chapel with its walls and ceiling covered with these immortal paintings. At first, when we enter, the complexity and richness of the design is bewildering. The traces of age are not wanting and the smoke of many candles has left an abiding dimness over the face of the vast compositions. But we have only to gaze with a patient eye and little by little all the grandeur of the design, the titanic symbolism, the splendid harmony and variety of the compositions come home little by little to the mind. The figure of Christ with that terrible gesture of judgment is the center of the scene. At His side sits His Blessed Mother, turning her face away as in pity from the hurtling throng of the damned. At the Saviour's right and left, above, and below, are such a multitude of figures, so wonderful in their harmonious variety, so manifold in their meaning, that words are inadequate to describe them. And as we turn our eyes from this tremendous composition, which might have been in itself the life work of a genius, we see the ceiling with its indescribable images, another such masterpiece, that taken together these two achievements seem to transcend the power of man. Yet Michelangelo declared to the last that he was no painter and that his business was with bronze and marble!

Five years after the Last Judgment was completed, on January 1st of 1547, Michelangelo was made sole architect of St. Peter's by Paul III and on the death of that pontiff was confirmed as architect of St. Peter's by his successor, Julius III, on the 24th of June, 1552. Tradition assigns the first building of a church to St. Peter on the spot where the great Basilica now stands to the Emperor Constan-

tine, though it is said that an oratory stood there to mark the place where St. Peter, as tradition had it, was buried. In the days of Nicholas V, that great Pontiff considered that the Basilica then existing had reached a dangerous condition and resolved on rebuilding it on a far larger scale. He died, however, when the building had only got a few feet above the ground in the neighborhood of the tribune, and during fifty years six Pontiffs came and went without attempting to continue the new St. Peter's.

It was Julius II, a man like Nicholas, of immense ideas, who resolved to resume the forgotten plan, but in still more magnificent proportions, Julius II gave the commission to Bramante, who drew a plan of great beauty. When he died, in 1514, Raphael was appointed architect. When Raphael died Sangallo was put in his place, and finally when he in his turn passed away Michelangelo became the sole architect.

All the architects had been minded to give St. Peter's a great cupola, but it was Michelangelo who was actually to design it and be the means of having it built. He commenced in a characteristic way by stipulating that he should receive no payment for his services, so that he might the better crush the dishonesty and sloth which had until then delayed the work. After some stormy times he succeeded at last in getting the work under way and commenced the strengthening of the four great piers which were to support the cupola. He erected masses of stone said to be sixty feet square and solid enough to support even a greater weight than the stupendous dome. Michelangelo regarded St. Peter's as the visible symbol of the majesty of Christ's Church and the great center of its worship. It is said that he believed, too, that he had a special mission from heaven to carry through this tremendous undertaking. The story is current in Rome that he declared "I will place the Pantheon on top of the Basilica of Constantine." The model was made in his lifetime and the work begun, but when he died the cupola was completed only to the top of the drum. It was finished, however, substantially according to his plans. The nave was lengthened until the plan took form as a Latin cross, whereas Michelangelo had planned the building almost in the shape of a square,



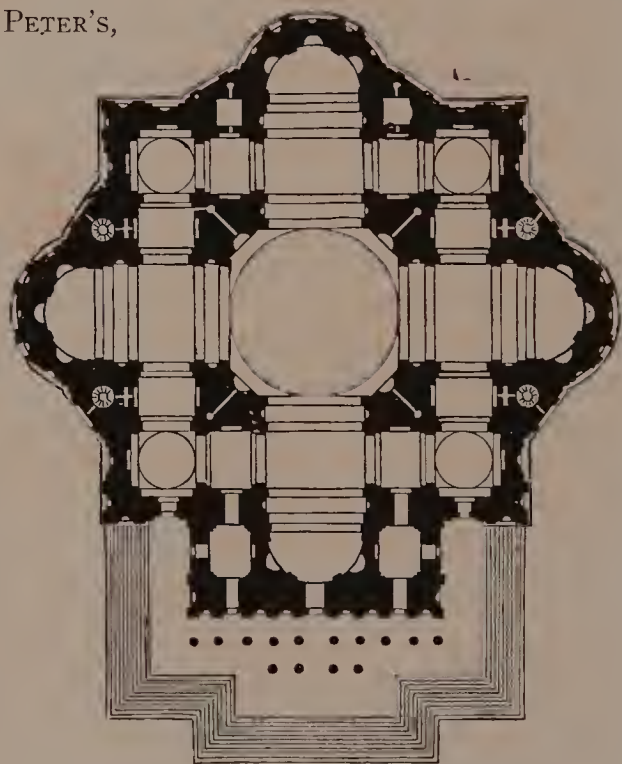
BRAMANTE'S GROUND PLAN OF ST. PETER'S,
ROME

of occupations, the constant insistence of great lords and princes who wished to claim his toil and the importunities of his father and his family, whom he supported, and who were ceaseless in their clamors for more gold and lands and goods. A hundred vexatious affairs troubled the mind of the great sculptor. In letter after letter among his preserved manuscripts he keeps fretting about who shall be the wife of his nephew Leonardo, and it is amusing to read that one maiden after another is taken up and discussed and put aside, until at last Michelangelo in despair leaves the thing to Leonardo to decide for himself.

The fretful temper of the great sculptor is stirred up mightily

with rounded corners. This has led Davies to remark that the structure to which the name of Michelangelo was attached would in its ultimate shape have drawn from him protests more strong than any that had been heard from him in his lifetime by pope or cardinal, deputy or clerk of the works.

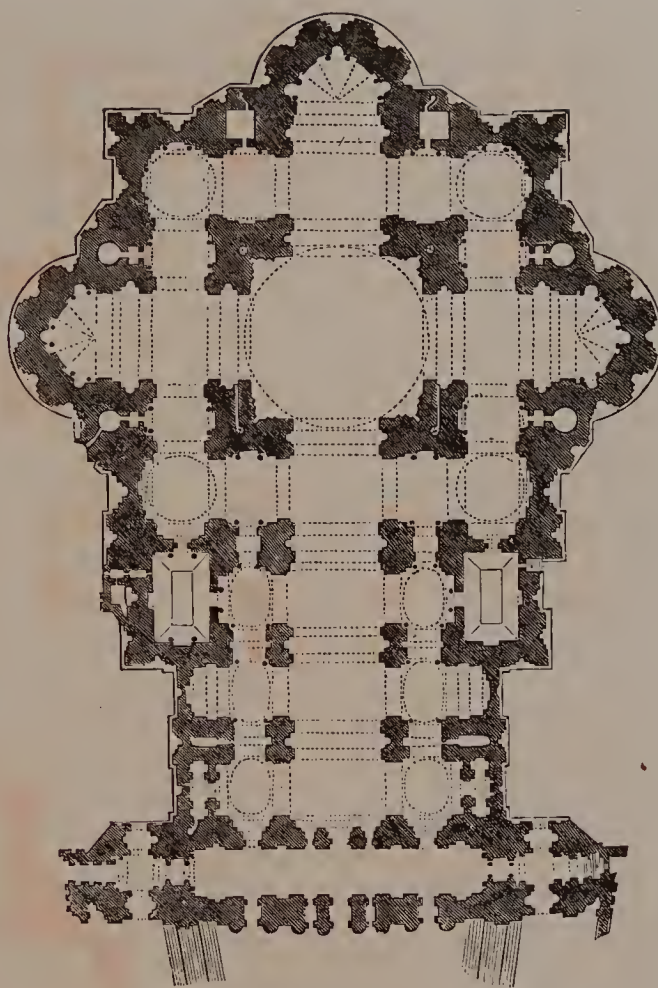
So continued those stormy and troubled days in which the great painter was forever face to face with weariness and excess



MICHELANGELO'S GROUND PLAN OF
ST. PETER'S

by trivial things. Thus, he writes to his nephew concerning some consignment of cloth that was long coming: "Leonardo, thou didst uncommonly well to give that cloth to such a scoundrel. I have been waiting a month for it here, and as I told others it was on its way, there is the greatest disappointment at its non-arrival. I beg of thee to find out what that scoundrel of a muleteer has done with it, and if thou recoverest it send it here as quickly as possible. If it cannot be found, and if thou canst get hold of the man, have the thieving rascal beaten, make him pay back the money and send me another seven braccia. As if I had not sufficient troubles without this! I have had, and still have, more worries and annoyances than I could possibly relate." But in the midst of this testy temper one sees time and again the beautiful charity of his character expressing itself in good deeds. Thus in his next letter to Leonardo he declares:

"I have received a letter from Francesca begging me to make an offering of ten crowns to her confessor on behalf of a poor girl he wishes to place in the Convent of Santa Lucia. I wish to do this for love of Francesca, for I know she would not make the request if it were not a case deserving of charity; but I do not know how to convey the money to Florence. Find out, therefore, from the confessor whether he has a friend here he can trust. I should give the money directly if I had the necessary information."



PRESENT-DAY GROUND PLAN OF ST. PETER'S



ST. PETER'S AT ROME

On June 16 he writes again to his nephew: "As to my condition I am in an evil plight; that is to say, I am suffering from all the ailments to which old age is subject, pains in my side and back so that oftentimes I cannot go up or down stairs. The worst of all is the anxiety which is consuming me, for I have not enough to keep me for three days if I were to let what I have here go to wrack and ruin. Pray God that He will help and counsel me."

In this connection let us remark that it is rather amusing to read the different estimates which various authors make of the character and career of Michelangelo. Some of them, like Romaine Rolland, depict him as a man who never could finish anything, who was forever unhappy, a pessimist who could not master his fate nor bring his achievements to a conclusion. We quote the following without assenting to its extravagances:

"He who does not believe in genius, who knows not what it is, let him look at Michelangelo," says Rolland. "Never before was man thus its prey. The genius which filled him did not seem to be of the same nature as he; it was like a conqueror who had rushed upon him and held him enslaved. His will in no way entered into it, and one might almost say the same of his mind and heart. It took the form of a frenzied enthusiasm—a formidable life in a body and soul too weak to hold it.

"Michelangelo lived in a state of continual enthusiasm. The suffering caused by the excess of strength with which he was, as it were, inflated, forced him to act, to act ceaselessly, without an hour's repose. 'I am wearing myself out with work as never man did before,' he wrote. 'I think of nothing else save working day and night.'

"This unhealthy craving for activity caused him not only to accumulate tasks and accept more commissions than he could execute. It degenerated into a mania. He wished to sculpture mountains. When he had a monument to build he wasted years in quarries, selecting his blocks of marble and making roads along which to carry them. He wanted to be everything—engineer, workman, stonecutter; to do everything himself—build palaces

and churches with no other aid than his own. His life resembled that of a convict. He did not grant himself even the time for eating and sleeping. In his letters we are continually coming across the following lamentable refrain:

“‘I have hardly time to eat. . . . I have no time to eat. . . . For the past twelve years I have been ruining my body with fatigue. I stand in need of necessities. . . . I struggle with poverty.’

“Michelangelo’s poverty was imaginary. He was wealthy. He became indeed, very wealthy. But what use did he make of his riches? He lived like a poor man, harnessed to his task like a horse to a millstone. No one could understand why he thus tortured himself. No one could understand that it was out of his power not to torture himself—that it was a necessity for him. Even his father—who had many of his son’s traits—reproached him:

“‘Your brother tells me that you live with great economy and even in a wretched manner. Economy is good, but poverty is bad—it is a vice which displeases both God and man and will do harm to your soul and your body. As long as you are young things will go fairly smoothly; but when you are no longer so, sicknesses and infirmities, which have had their origin in that bad and wretched life, will make their appearance. Avoid poverty, live with moderation, mind you do not stand in need of necessities, and beware of excess of work.’

“But counsel was ever without avail; never would he consent to treat himself in a more humane manner. A little bread and wine sufficed to nourish him. Barely a few hours were devoted to sleep. When at Bologna, occupied with the bronze statue of Julius II, he had only one bed for himself and his three assistants. He lay down to rest fully dressed and booted. On one occasion his legs swelled so much that his boots had to be cut, and in removing them the skin of his limbs came with them.

“As a result of this terrible life he was, as his father had prophesied, constantly ill. We find fourteen to fifteen serious illnesses mentioned in his letters. More than once fever brought him

near to death's door. He suffered in his eyes, teeth, head and heart. He was racked with neuralgia, especially when he had retired to rest, and thus sleep had become a torture to him. He became prematurely old. At forty-two years of age he had a sense of his decrepitude. At forty-eight he wrote that for every day he worked he had to rest four. He obstinately refused to accept the advice of a doctor.

"Everything disquieted him. Even the members of his own family made a mockery of his eternal disquietude. As he himself said, he lived 'in a state of melancholy, or rather of madness.' By dint of much suffering he ended by finding a sort of bitter pleasure in pain.

"He was irresolute in art, in politics, in all his actions and in all his thoughts. Between two works, two projects, or two lines of conduct he was never able to choose. The history of the monument to Julius II, the facade of San Lorenzo, and the tombs of the Medici is proof of this. He began and began again, but never reached the end. He had barely made his choice than he began to doubt about it. At the end of his life he completed nothing: everything disgusted him. It has been alleged that his tasks were imposed upon him, and the responsibility of this perpetual wavering between one project and another has been laid on the shoulders of his masters. People forget that his masters had no means of imposing them upon him had he decided to refuse them. But he dare not.

"He was weak. He was weak in all ways; through virtue and through timidity. He was weak through conscience. He tormented himself with a thousand scruples which a more energetic nature would have rejected. Through an exaggerated sense of responsibility he felt himself obliged to undertake mediocre tasks which any foreman could have done better. He knew neither how to keep his engagements nor to forget them."

We give this lengthy passage to show how some of Michelangelo's biographers take liberties with his character. No very

great acumen is necessary to discern that the portrait of his weaknesses is exaggerated and overdrawn.

On the other hand Gerald S. Davies gives quite another account of Michelangelo and his character:

"As a man his qualities were, to a great extent, with him from the first and were with him to the last. The masterful, magnificent will which saw in every enterprise its purpose clearly from the first, and which brought all the highly trained forces of mind and body into immediate action for its end; the mental energy which compelled a bodily frame of less than average strength—it will not be forgotten that his childhood was very sickly, and the last twenty years of his life weighed down by a painful disease—to accomplish the work of two or three ordinary men; the broad power of seeing at once the greater facts of life—the essentials of all that he was to put his hand to—to the omission of the meaner facts; the true humility of his nature—strangely in contrast at first sight, yet in no real contrast at all, to that impetuous, independent temper of his—which made him at every moment of his life a learner, truly the most docile of men.

"One thinks indeed of the old man in his last years as they found him one snowy winter's day near to the Colosseum. 'Why here, and whither going on such a day?' 'To school, to school to see if I can learn anything.' And one thinks again of the design of the reverse of Leone Leoni's medal, which the master himself suggested, with the old blind man led by a dog. It was the secret of a life, a secret which lay far down out of the sight of other men, who saw only the apparent self-assertion, the youthful pugnacity, which survived, by reason of his mental and physical vigor, far into the years when most men lay it by perforce, while they did not see the true humility of nature which underlay it all. These qualities began to mark his dealings with the world and his works in it, at a time when he was hardly out of his boyhood. And so, too, did the corresponding faults; the same fierce occasional fits of temper as those which led him to express hasty and ungenerous opinions; the same nervous irritability which caused him to throw the letter

of his nephew Leonardo, whom he really loved, into the fire, because he said the handwriting amazed him; the constant despondency which overtook him after his periods of most eager, most lofty aspiration; the needless suspicion of the good faith of men about him, often expressed in letters, which at the same time bore witness to the most generous thoughts and the most generous deeds to others; the high-handed treatment of all opinion contrary to his own; the impatience with all opposition even from men whose attainments qualified them to oppose; and, on the other hand, his tender considerate handling of men of very poor capacities who sought his aid.

"These contraries receive illustration, not from one or two, but from countless incidents in the long, much tried life of the man. He can be needlessly fierce and rude of speech when he thinks he is being made sport of by Leonardo da Vinci, ungenerous of judgment when he fancies he is being trapped by Bramante or Raphael; impatiently scornful when he is face to face with the 'sect of Sangallo;' but tender as a woman when poor Urbino is to be nursed or when some poor girl needs a marriage dower, or the widow of one who has served him finds the wolf at her door.

"He has been accused of personal timidity on account of his leaving Florence in his early days under the Medici, and again when he left his post as engineer in the siege of Florence by Clement and Charles V. The reader will have perhaps realized that neither case demands such an explanation. The man was no physical coward who faced the terrors of the plague with its often tried power to demoralize and destroy the nearest of natural affections, whether in Athens, in Florence, or in London, that he might nurse poor Buonarroto, stricken with the fell disease, till the brother died in his arms. For the other sort of courage his life needs no certificate from any source. Julius and Leo, Clement and Paul, masterful men one and all, were no match for him in determination. He does not fear to let the Duke Alessandro, in whom vice and depravity had long killed out all scruple about the life of a man, know that he will work for none like him. Life in Rome was not too safe

in the sixteenth century even without the hatred of Italian workmen and jobbing underlings balked of their sources of gain. He incurred it fearlessly without looking to his right hand or to his left.

"There is, too, a striking contrast between the outspoken freedom and even rashness of his utterances in all matters where he had a right to an utterance, and the self-control which kept his lips sealed in all matters which did not pertain to his immediate duties and to his art. There is no artist of his period and country whose surviving letters are so numerous, none whose life covers events of such absorbing interest to his country. He had lived in Florence in the days of Savonarola, and yet there is only one hint in his letters that he had ever known, admired, followed the great *frate*. He is in Rome in the days of the Borgia, and yet his letters might have been written from a workshop in a Quaker settlement. He is in Florence in the troubled days of Alessandro; first in command as engineer of the defenses; an outlaw with a price upon his head; and the letters of the time are placid records of commissions or complaints about his contracts.

"He carries this unbroken silence about matters which to him, as a patriot and a thinker and a student of humanity, must have been very near his heart, to a length which, brought doubtless also into his other relations of life, gave to it that aloofness which isolated him from the deeper friendships that can exist only where there is complete exchange of thought. Once only did he find one—in Vittoria Colonna—with whom this exchange seems to have been possible. Amongst those who knew him and who were actually his friends there were many who were devoted to him, whose kindness he valued to the full. To none of these did he fully open his heart on any of the subjects which lay nearest to it. He reveals his true self—his true thoughts to them only as to the rest of the world. They may seek him, as we others must seek him, in his works."

Of these two estimates of Michelangelo, that of Davies is more correct and objective; yet neither of these authors can quite understand him, whose religion was so much a part of his life and who

was so completely moved and informed by his Catholic faith. It is in the sonnets and other poems of Michelangelo that one best sees his true character. He was a man devoted, strong, pious, but of a stormy and irritable disposition, who fought his way through life in a troubled age, and found peace at last where his great friend Vittoria Colonna found it, in piety and faith.

The recently issued edition of his letters and papers, translated by Carden, throw a most interesting light upon his trials and struggles, his disappointments and vexations, no less than upon his deep piety and active charity towards the poor.

Of the other works of Michelangelo, of his friendship with Vittoria Colonna, the one great friendship of his life and a model of pure and disinterested affection, of his sonnets, in which he carved words as he carved stone, of his great old age, his deep piety, and his holy death we have no longer space to say. It would require more than another chapter to do justice to the religious and the literary side of this titan among artists. He gained a place among the very greatest of masters in creative art. "There are four men," says H. Tain "in the world of art and of literature so exalted above all others as to seem to belong to another race; namely, Dante, Shakespeare, Beethoven and Michelangelo." Symonds has called him "the interpreter of the burden and the pain of the Renaissance." Sir Sidney Colvin has said that his history is one of indomitable will and almost superhuman energy, yet a will that hardly ever had its way and of energy much worn with circumstance.

Let us conclude with the words of Lubke, who declares: "In these bold forms, humanly outlined and exhibited with unsurpassable breadth and freedom, he sets before us a type of being in whose presence everything low falls from us, and our feelings experience the same alleviation that they do before true tragedy. Lastly that which ever and ever anew sympathetically attracts us, even in those of his figures which we at first found repellent, is the fact that they are inwardly allied to the best of us, to our own striving for all that is holy and ideal."



THE CRUCIFIXION
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

FRA ANGELICO



IT was a happy providence that brought the young Guido da Vicchio, already an accomplished artist, and with the gold of genius in his soul, to be a postulant at the monastery of the Dominicans at Fiesole, near Florence. The world could ill spare either the loveliness or the heavenly idealism of his paintings. The union of genius with sanctity, of skill with vision, make this glorious painter of the Blessed unique and priceless in the field of art.

Little is known of the early days of Guido da Vicchio. He was born at Vicchio, from which he took the name by which he was originally known, in the year 1387, and his father was called Pietra. These scanty details are practically all that have come down to us concerning his career before the age of twenty, when we find him asking admission to the Dominican Monastery at Fiesole. Vicchio is a stronghold built by the Florentines to protect their fair territory against the inroads of those stormy feudal tyrants the Conti Guidi. It stands in the wide and lovely valley of the Mugello, the name given to the upper and middle part of the Sieve valley. "A fair and pleasant land it is," writes Morelli, a chronicler of old time, "decked with fruits luscious and delightful, watered and made lovely as a garden by a clear river which runs through it from one end to the other, and by many a smaller stream which roams about the plain like a trailing garland."

One can still see, so travelers say, a great part of its six-sided rubble wall and two massive gateways east and west, and close against its battlements homes have been built. The loveliness and pleasure of the scene from the western gate surpass description. The valley is like a garden. "A land," says Lanton Douglas, to whose book on Fra Angelico we are indebted for many details concerning the angelic painter, "of corn and wine, a land of flowers and fruit, a land of brooks and springs of water; where, in the month of April, white-crested waves of blossom fleck a broad sea of vivid green, and violets and iris make beautiful the banks of its

poplar-shadowed streams. . . . A fitting home, this, for the childhood of one who loved so the colored things of life and the flower-like faces of little children."

It is quite likely that the gifted boy went early to an artist's studio and there passed his youth; for Vasari, that copious and common mine of fact and fable concerning the painters of the Renaissance, whom modern authors delight to quote as much as they enjoy refuting his sometimes obvious lapses into fiction, declares that whilst very young he was perfectly acquainted with the practices of his art; and a biographer of earlier date, by name Antonio Billi, tells us that while still a very young man he painted a picture on the great screen of Santa Maria Novella. Critics confirm this early skill of the angelic painter from the evidence of his works, which all are admirable in technique, and show that in his youth he must have had a thorough professional training under some master who was able to initiate him into the mysteries of the art of tempera painting.

Many bold conjectures have been made as to who was the instructor of Fra Angelico in his art, but it seems quite impossible to decide. As Douglas remarks, some of the painters like Agnolo Gaddi had great factories of pictures where the handicraftsmen worked at one another's paintings and copied one another's figures. At Florence and at Sienna hundreds of painters were engaged in important undertakings to whom not one existing picture is attributed. Fra Angelico had moreover a very strong individuality and was one of the first pioneers of the new movement in painting. He was eager to acquire fresh knowledge of his art, but would not use it until he had thoroughly assimilated it and, so to say, transmuted it into his own personality. "Early in his career he found himself; and no artist was ever more true to his own temperament. Artistically, at least, he dared to live his own life, and his works, too, reveal that in other things he was no respecter of persons. His development was continuous, and he always developed on his own lines. He did not, like another brother of San Marco, Fra Bartolommeo, allow himself to be diverted from his own true course by some masterful personality.



THE ANNUNCIATION
In the Chapel of Convent, Montecarlo

Still, as the same author says, we can tell of the artistic influences in Florence in Fra Angelico's youth which must have left their mark upon him as an artist. First there were the *botteghe* or workshops of pupils of men like Agnolo Gaddi. Secondly, there were the schools of the miniaturists, the chief of which was that of the Camaldolese Convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli, and third, there was a group of young sculptors, among them Brunelleschi and Donatello, who were to produce the most perfect art works of the quattrocento. By all of these Fra Angelico was influenced. The miniaturists adorned the choir books and other volumes with scrolls and borders, and with miniatures and capitals. In the first periods of his career Fra Angelico shows some of the defects as well as the virtues of these artists in little.

But whatever his artistic training may have been in his youth, we know for certain that he was profoundly influenced in his intellectual and his spiritual life by the two tremendous movements which surged through Florence in the early years of the fourteenth century, when Guido da Vicchio, afterwards to be called Fra Angelico, was a youth there. The first of these great movements was the humanist revival, of which Florence became a center. There Chrysoloras lectured on Greek to throngs of eager students. Thence Niccolo Niccoli sent his messengers over sea and land in search of manuscripts of the classics. The youth of Florence became passionately enthusiastic over the study of classical literature. Men came from other places to work under the Florentine masters of the old learning. Indeed so wild did the enthusiasm become that this movement, which at first seemed to its adherents to make for sound Christianity, began in some of its followers to show a dark tendency to the imitation of pagan vices and gave good and thoughtful men occasion for anxious foreboding.

To check this evil tendency and to counteract it there arose a great Dominican preacher and scholar, Giovanni Dominici. He was no enemy to learning or to culture, but he feared the excesses of some of the humanists and wished to stop them. So first he established houses of Dominicans under a stricter rule and governed

by men whom he himself had trained and inspired with some of his own spirit. He wrote treatises warning good folk against the excesses of the classical scholars. He traveled through Italy from one end to the other, preaching in the larger places and stirring men up to a sense of the dangers which classical learning might bring.

But this powerful preacher, fervent and devout, did not condemn nor ignore the claims of learning and of art. On the contrary, it was the reasonableness of his teaching and its balance between the extremes of excessive devotion to these pursuits and a fanatical abhorrence of them that won to him the allegiance of a glorious group of talented young men who became no less famous for saintliness than for sweet reasonableness and high achievement. St. Antonio, for example, was of those who came to join the fervent Giovanni, and among the others who sought admission to the Dominicans, swayed no doubt by Giovanni's love of art and his friendship for artists as well as by his piety and convincing eloquence, were Guido da Vicchio and his brother, Benedetto. These two devoted brothers had played together in the flowery vale of Mugello, had shared their boyhood joys, and now at the convent of Fiesole, which Giovanni Dominici had founded on the lower slopes of the hill, they entered into a still closer bond by vowing together perpetual poverty, chastity, obedience in the great Order of St. Dominic. The young Guido took the name of Giovanni. It was only when his lovely paintings had made it clear how intimate he was with the angels that his loving countrymen gave him the fair name by which he is known to all following generations, "Fra Angelico," "Brother Angelic."

Then began for him that quiet and holy life of the cloister, in which this chaste and devout soul was to find a heaven on earth and an easy passage from earth to heaven. He was soon sent on to the Dominican house at Cortona, as there was no novitiate at Florence. Thence, after another brief stay at Fiesole in the following year, it is uncertain where he went when the Dominicans were forced to leave Fiesole because of their fidelity to the true Pope, Gregory XII, whose false rival, Alexander V, so-called, was ad-



THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN
In the Louvre, Paris

hered to by the Florentines. But it is likely that Fra Angelico went back to Cortona and spent seven or eight years in the lofty Etruscan city. This town was already full of the recollections of saints. There had lived a great servant of God, Ricardo the Augustinian. There had dwelt the great penitent St. Margaret of Cortona, friend of the poor, peacemaker, unsparing foe of corruption in the Church. There, above all, St. Francis had preached and made converts and thither he had come on his last, sad journey when near to death. Nay, in Fra Angelico's own day Cortona was a city of saints. Four or five of his contemporaries there were raised to the altars of the Church, and his early years were spent with men like the Blessed Lorenzo Ripafratta and St. Antonino.

Fra Angelico's life as a Dominican embraces, according to the close and careful studies of Lanton Douglas, four chief periods. "From 1409 to 1418 he resided in part at Cortona, in part at Folligno. Then until 1436 he dwelt at Fiesole. Thence until 1447 San Marco, at Florence, was his home. The last eight years of his life, when his fame was ripe and the capital of the world required him, were spent at Rome. There is only one work of his that can probably be assigned to the time of his residence at Cortona. Until 1433, while he was always developing and learning, there is, says Douglas, no sign of sudden advance in his career. Then, in 1433, and for the few years immediately following, the evolution of his style is very rapid. He frees himself entirely from the cramping influence of the miniaturists. He makes great improvement in drawing and modeling, the features of his madonnas and saints, their garments and backgrounds become classic instead of gothic. The attendant saints of his altar pieces begin to arrange themselves in groups around the central figure. At the close of this period of transition which immediately preceded his residence at San Marco, Fra Angelico "stood out as one of the leaders of the new movement, a pioneer of the Renaissance."

The art of Fra Angelico has been grievously misrepresented and sadly misunderstood. So has his personal character and the intensity of his genius. Not wishing to believe, for one reason or

another, that a great artist can be greatly holy or a very holy soul a great artist, some self-constituted critics describe Fra Angelico as "a mild, meek, angelic monk, who bolted his monastery doors and sprinkled holy water in the face of the antique. Others again, like Douglas himself, describe him as an artist who happened to be a saint, resenting what they consider an over-emphasis on his piety. The truth is, as someone has put it, that this holy genius prayed while he painted and painted while he prayed. His inspiration was as genuinely artistic as it was deeply religious. In him to an astonishing degree the saint is a true artist, and the artist a true saint. We use this term saint, of course, not in a strict sense of one who has been canonized by the Church. Fra Angelico never received this honor given to so many of his brethren. Yet that he was saintly in his life and character, a lover of perfection and a follower of the high ideals of his order, all records agree, and the names, Fra Angelico, Il Beato, by which he has been called, sufficiently attest.

Let us listen again to Vasari, as he sings the praises of this man of God: "Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole," he says, "was no less preeminent as a painter and miniaturist than as a religious. This father, truly angelic, spent all his life in the service of God and for the good of the world and his neighbor. In truth, the great and extraordinary powers possessed by Fra Giovanni could not have existed except in a man of most holy life. He might indeed, had he so chosen, have lived in the world in the greatest comfort, and beyond what he himself already possessed have gained whatever he wanted more, by the practice of those arts of which, while still a young man, he was already a master. But he chose instead, being well disposed and pious by nature, for his greater contentment and peace of mind, and above all, for the salvation of his soul, to enter the Order of Preachers. . . . Rightly indeed was he called Angelico, for he gave his whole life to God's service and to the doing of good works for mankind and for his neighbor. . . . He was entirely free from guile, and holy in all his acts. . . . He kept himself unspotted from the world and living in purity and holiness.



THE MADONNA WITH CHILD JESUS, SAINTS AND ANGELS
In the Vatican, Rome

"He was so much the friend of the poor that I think his soul is now in heaven. He labored assiduously at painting, but he never cared to work at any but sacred subjects. Rich indeed he might have been, yet for riches he took no thought. He was wont to say that true riches consist in being contented with little. He might have borne rule over many, but he did not choose to do so, believing that he who obeys has fewer cares and is less likely to go astray. It was in his power, too, to have held high places, both within his order and without it; but he cared nothing for such honors, affirming that he sought no other dignity than the avoidance of hell and the attainment of paradise. And, in truth, what dignity can compare with that which not only religious but all men ought to strive after, namely, that which is to be found in God alone and in a virtuous order of life. . . . Fra Angelico was of a most humane and temperate disposition, and living in chastity, he did not become entangled in the world's snares. In fact, he used often to say that he who practiced art had need of quiet and of a life free from care, and that he who had to do with the things of Christ ought to live with Christ. He was never seen to show anger towards any of his brethren . . . and when he did admonish a friend he was accustomed to do so gently and with a smiling face.

"And to those who wished him to work for them he would reply with the utmost good will that if they could come to terms with the prior he would not fail them. In a word, this friar, who can never be too much praised, was most humble and modest in every word and work, and in his pictures showed both genius and piety. The saints that he painted have more of the aspect and character of saintship than any others. It was his custom never to retouch or repaint any of his works, but to leave them always just as they were when finished the first time; for he believed, as he himself said, that such was the will of God. It is said, indeed, that Fra Giovanni never took a brush in his hand until he had first offered a prayer; nor did he paint a Crucifixion without tears streaming down his cheeks. And both in the faces and attitudes of his figures it is easy to find proof of his sincere and deep devotion to the religion of Christ."

To visit the convent of San Marco in Florence is an experience which prints itself in glowing colors upon the memory. We passed through cell after cell of the old habitations of Fra Angelico's brethren in which we came upon visions of loveliness which his faithful brush left upon the walls for the edification and pleasure of the dweller there. For six years he labored faithfully at this work of love and many a silent hour of ecstatic contemplation did the monks pass before those celestial images. It was a rare privilege indeed to have an original of Fra Angelico in so many cells of a community!

We pass from one to the other, bewildered and enchanted by the richness of such a spectacle. Here is the cell where Savonarola lived, and here that other to which Cosimo di Medici used to repair for quiet and seclusion from his cares of state and where Fra Angelico painted for him a charming picture. Then there is a rich store of illuminated books to be seen where one may trace the resemblances between these brilliantly colored miniatures and the glowing pictures of Fra Angelico. But the climax of all is reached when one descends to the former refectory and guest rooms of the convent and sees the blaze of celestial hues in those choice works of Fra Angelico which are exhibited there. The beauty of the coloring is indescribable and the freshness is delightful after so many years. One goes from picture to picture, enchanted with every one and hardly knowing which to prefer in such a profusion. The calm beatitude of these pictured countenances surpasses description. It seems the authentic look of the blessed in heaven. The meditations of the saintly monk are here set forth with charming simplicity and loveliness. We seemed to behold the converse of the blessed and every gesture, every look embodies the boundless charity for God and man which is the joy of heaven.

As I approached one of the loveliest of the paintings there stood before it a nervous little man who was fanning himself *crescendo* and dancing with delight. He looked around, unable to contain his emotions: "They say," said he in French and Latin, "the heavens announce the glory of God. But of a very truth Angelico



THE ANNUNCIATION
In the Pinacotheca, Perugia

announces His glory!" "Indeed, my friend," I replied, "you are very right! Beato Angelico does indeed declare the glory of God!"

When one comes to speak of the paintings of Fra Angelico in detail one is at a loss for words to do justice to that other-worldliness, that strange and spiritual charm which he possesses in a singular degree and which makes his work so characteristic and easily recognized even by those who have no very deep knowledge of painting or art. The marvelous simplicity and innocence which shine out in the calm beatitude of his paintings, the intensity and purity of religious emotion which he has contrived to express in the features of angels and of saints, the beauty of his simplicity, the purity of the coloring, the radiant holiness and the ecstatic repose, the loveliness of his figures, purify the imagination of him who looks upon them, lift the heart like the upward lines of a gothic spire, entrance the mind with visions of heaven and are the nearest approach surely to conceiving the inconceivable glory which eye hath not seen nor ear heard and which it hath not entered into the mind of man to body forth. Is it not just to call such a one the court painter of heaven?

Thurston, in his book, *The Art of Looking at Pictures*, which will be of help to tyros who wish to study art in the galleries, gives, in part, these instructions for looking at the pictures of Fra Angelico: "Look intently into the eyes of the prominent figure until you feel the intensity and purity of the religious emotion with which they glow. Examine several of the faces in the same way. Now look at both mouth and eyes together until you realize that the faces express not only radiant saintliness and perfect faith, but sweetness of character and an entire lack of self-complacence. Note what a variety of expression you can now see in these faces which at first sight looked so much alike. Examine the hands, and observe that those which are not in any attitude of prayer or praise are engaged either in some unselfish service or in a gesture of affection. Note the touch of loveliness which the hair often adds to a face. See how expressive the occasional back views have been made. Feel the general upward sweep of the lines of the draperies."



THE VISITATION AND THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
Church of the Gesu, Cortona

Injustice has been done to the art of Fra Angelico, as is pointed out effectively by Douglas, in that his least worthy and feeblest productions have caught an unfortunate popularity and been peddled about as examples of his art until they stand in the minds of many persons as the characteristic specimens of his work.

"Unfortunately the manufacturers of reproductions of the works of the Italian masters would seem to have conspired with popular writers," says Douglas, "to keep alive a derogatory view of Fra Angelico's art. Every great artist has his moments of weakness, and the Dominican painter was certainly not without them. But he is perhaps the only master of his own rank of whom it is true that the feeblest of all his productions are those by which he is most widely known. It is not too much to say that in the case of nine persons out of every ten who have any knowledge of him, the angels playing on musical instruments which adorn the frame of the Madonna del Linajuoli are symbols of his artistic achievement. But these figures, which hold so high a place in popular estimation, are artistically contemptible. They deserve, in fact, all that daring critics have said about them. For they are nothing more than 'celestial dolls, flat as paper, stuck fast to their gold frames.' To anyone who knows how consummate was Fra Angelico's power of rendering form when he was at his best, it is surprising that even in a moment of weakness he should have given to the world such inferior stuff as this is.

"That he did so is the more to be wondered at when we call to mind other angels painted by the same artist, which are as satisfying to the artistic sense as these are disappointing and grievous. Those who love and reverence Fra Angelico would like to lose all recollection of them, just as they would wish to bury in oblivion the early, brief indiscretions of one whose whole subsequent life has been of such a character as to command their affection and admiration. But it is just these figures in all their inane prettiness that the public have chosen to regard as his most characteristic works. Vulgar copies of them, flatter and more formless than their flat originals, are displayed to view in the shop windows of



THE ESPOUSALS OF THE VIRGIN AND THE VISITATION
Church of the Gesu, Cortona

every second-rate picture dealer. They are repeated *ad nauseam* on Christmas cards and almanacs. Reproductions of them are to be seen in the boudoirs of countless ladies who desire to be thought persons of taste and sensibility. Popular preachers make allusion to their paradisiacal forms and faces when they desire to give an air of connoisseurship to a rhetorical period. And so it has come about that to most people they are symbols of Fra Angelico's artistic virtues. For once a great master was shorn of his strength, seduced by mere prettiness. For once he gave himself into the hands of the Philistines. For once his sense of material and spiritual significance would seem to have been almost as low as theirs. For a moment he was all that they would have wished him to be. They will not allow us to forget it!"

The same writer goes on to say that even the works of Fra Angelico possessed by the National Gallery and the Louvre are not by any means the most remarkable even of his paintings in tempera. And these in turn are immeasurably inferior to his frescoes, those splendid and strong creations, to see which one must go to Fra Angelico's native country and look at such works as the Coronation at San Marco, of whose angels it has been said, "those blessed spirits cannot be otherwise than they are in that picture."

But if the general public has been deceived in measure concerning the excellences of Fra Angelico, it has not been so with the elect in art. "Surely," said Michelangelo, as he looked at one of these pictures, "the good monk visited paradise and was allowed to choose his models there." "The light of his studio," echoes Paul de St. Victor, "came from paradise."

The art critic J. A. Symonds declares of Fra Angelico: "His world is a strange one—a world not of hills and fields and flowers and men of flesh and blood, but one where the people are embodied ecstasies, the colors tints from evening clouds or apocalyptic jewels, the scenery a flood of light or a background of illuminated gold. His mystic gardens, where the ransomed souls embrace and dance with angels on the lawns outside the City of the Lamb, are such as were never trodden by the foot of man in any paradise of



THE ANNUNCIATION
In the Church of the Gesu, Cortona

earth." John Ruskin, he of the ardent enthusiasms in art, thus speaks of Fra Angelico: "The art of Angelico, both as a colorist and a draughtsman, is consummate; so perfect and so beautiful that his work may be recognized at a distance by the rainbow-play and brilliancy of it; however closely it may be surrounded by other works of the same school, glowing with enamel and gold, Angelico's may be told from them at a glance, like so many huge pieces of opal among common marbles."

One might continue thus to quote praises of this admirable painter. But we must save some space for a more detailed mention of one or another of his pictures. It was during what is called by Douglas his first Fiesolan period, that is, before the year 1433, that Fra Angelico painted the six scenes from the life of the Virgin, of which one, the Annunciation, with the Visitation and the Dormition of the Virgin, is to be found in the oratory at Cortona. This Annunciation is an example of the earlier period of Fra Angelico's work. One sees in this picture the charming simplicity of outline, the heavenly singleness of purpose, which characterize all of Fra Angelico's paintings. Notice in particular the expression and gesture of the angel, the directness and solemnity of his demeanor. As one looks steadily at him one can hear those momentous words, those words of divine import which he has come from heaven to utter: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women." And in her gesture and attitude how clearly are expressed the humility and acquiescence of the chosen virgin: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."

In this picture, too, one sees the delight of Fra Angelico in the natural world, a manifestation of a new spirit then commencing to show itself in art. "Outside the loggia in which the Virgin sits is a garden; and such a garden!—full of the loveliest flowers, roses red and white, and marguerites, and pinks, and jonquils, and orchids. It is obvious, and in one instance even too obvious, that before making his garden the friar had made careful studies from nature. Of the red pink he has given us the flower in three stages

—in bud, half open and full-blown. Beautiful as it is, and delicately as it is painted, it has a little too much the air of a botanical illustration. But as we look at the painter's pleasance we soon forget this. Under the spell of his enchantment we follow him across that deep flower-flecked grass to the cool shade of the orchard; full of a pleasant sense of the beauty of the world and of God its maker." Another picture of this same period is the Last Judgment, now in the Academy at Florence, in which we have the charming detail of the Dance of the Angels.

One leaves with reluctance so delightful a painter and so holy a soul. Toward the end of the year 1449 Fra Angelico was prior of his old monastery of San Domenico at Fiesole. In 1452 he was invited to paint the choir chapel of the Cathedral of Prata, but declined the invitation. The year 1455 found him in Rome, and there, as a contemporary historian declares: "Envious death broke his pencil, and his beautiful soul winged its way among the angels to make paradise more joyous." He died in the great convent of his own order, Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.

The Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva is one of the most splendid sanctuaries of Rome, its one ancient church in the Gothic style. Its pointed arches are a relief to the eye fatigued with the incessant repetition of the Roman. A host of beautiful objects, paintings, sculpture, attract the eye when one first enters this chief of Dominican churches. Yet on our own first visit there, we confess to have been drawn as though by a magnet straight to the high altar beneath which repose under a beautiful effigy, the remains of that sweet saint Catherine of Sienna, the central flower in all this loveliness.

But our devotions finished before St. Catherine's shrine, we turned to seek another grave. In the chapel to the gospel side, let into the marble floor and guarded by a low barrier of rope, we found the grave of Fra Angelico, covered by a slab bearing the effigy of a monk, his hands crossed on his bosom, his ascetical features quiet as in sleep. At the foot of the effigy is carved the following inscription:



DANCE OF THE ANGELS—(A DETAIL OF THE LAST JUDGMENT)
In the Academy, Florence

*"Non mihi sit laudi, quod eram velut alter Apelles,
Sed quod lucra tuis omnia, Christe, dabam;
Altera nam terris opera extant, altera coelo;
Urbs me Joannem flos tulit Etruriae."*

Which one may translate as follows:

*"Not to me be the praise that I was like another Apelles,
But that all my gains I gave to thy friends, O Christ.
These deeds endure on earth, but those in heaven.
I, John, am son of that city, Etruria's flower."*

We shall conclude this brief, inadequate sketch of a man who deserves volumes of the praise he declined during his life upon earth, with a quotation from Douglas, the final words of his book on Fra Angelico, from which we have drawn so copiously for this article: "The artist woos us away from our sorrows, from our consciousness of the world's pain, and makes us look out upon life with his eyes. We believe for the moment that the maladies of humanity are remediable; that they are being remedied, that they are themselves but necessary episodes in the gradual evolution of a more perfect order. We look out upon all things and see that they are very good. The friar lived in the happy springtime of the modern world; his pictures are full of the spirit of the spring, a spirit of faith and hope and gladness."

It was only after his death that his countrymen gave to him the titles Angelico, the Angelic; and Il Beato, the Blessed. They were due as much to his personal character as to his heavenly skill. Calm lover of beauty, familiar with the angels even on earth, thou who hast given us to see even with the eyes of the flesh more of the bright beatitude of the celestial loveliness of heaven's citizens than it has ever been vouchsafed to other artists to disclose, limner of Madonnas of divine loveliness, who can doubt that God had accomplished in thee all that thy name implies and that now, in the company of thy angels, of Jesus, Mary and the saints of heaven's court, to whom thou wast court painter on earth, thou walkest amid the celestial beauties which thy pure eyes availed to see even on earth and through the clouds of flesh!

MURILLO



AMONG all the painters of the Madonna—and what great artist from Leonardo da Vinci's time has not found his loftiest inspiration in that charming theme, most holy and most human?—it is Murillo who deserves to be called *par excellence* court painter to the Queen of Heaven. It is he who more than all the others has so wedded in the works of his brush the most vivid realism with the greatest intensity of devotion that non-Catholic critics ask in a puzzled way how the same man could be so keen a realist and so deep a mystic. They fail to perceive that it is the vividness of his faith and the truth of his devotion which make the work of Murillo at once so real and so full of pious fervor.

Besides, there is no painter of his eminence who has chosen the blessed Queen of Heaven as subject for his brush so often in proportion as Murillo. His Madonnas, like a bit of heaven, lighten the dull walls of many a museum and private collection. Again and again, in the mysteries of her life and the glory of her Assumption, he painted with a loving and tireless brush that maiden mother who has been the loftiest inspiration of Christian art from its beginning. But it is as the painter of The Immaculate Conception that Murillo has gained his most singular distinction. No less than twenty times, without ever repeating himself or growing tired of his glorious subject, did Murillo depict the Mother of God at that moment of her assumption into heaven which has been taken by the tradition of painters as the fittest time to commemorate her privilege of the Immaculate Conception. There are six versions of this theme from his glowing brush in the city of Madrid, six others in his beloved Seville, one, a most famous one, at the Louvre, and others scattered through the galleries of Europe.

It is no wonder, considering the circumstances of his birth, that Murillo was so devoted to the Blessed Mother of God and in particular to the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. Born in



SELF-PORTRAIT OF MURILLO

Seville, in the heart of Andalusia, he was brought up in an atmosphere instinct with love for the holy Mother of God and in particular under the title of The Immaculate Conception. Spain had for many years been noted for devotion to the Immaculate Conception before that holy mystery was made a dogma of faith. The national salute expressed this devotion, and one who entered the house of a friend, instead of wishing him good-day would call out, by custom, *Ave Maria purissima!* "Hail, Mary, most pure!" Whereupon the other would reply: *Sin pecado concebida!* "Conceived without sin!" So that the very daily salutations of the people constantly commemorated the mystery they most dearly loved. Murillo was born on the twenty-first of December, 1617, and it was in the same year, notes one author, that the mystery of the Immaculate Conception was solemnly celebrated in Spain. The tremendous rejoicings on that occasion were held in Seville, only a few months before Murillo's birth. The people were in a frenzy of joy, the archbishop performed a great service of thanksgiving at the Cathedral. While all the bells in the churches in Seville rang out a deafening peal and the artillery on the walls and by the river thundered in unison, the organ and the choir of the Cathedral burst forth in mighty hymns of praise to the Immaculate, and all the people were beside themselves with delight.

Born in such an atmosphere of faith and devotion, Murillo delineated upon his canvas the lovely vision of the Immaculate which even the lowliest of his fellow townsmen carried in their hearts. But it is not only in his marvelous skill in painting her under the title of The Immaculate Conception that Mary seems to have taken under her protection this Bartolome Estéban Murillo who was to be the pride of Spain. Through all his good and happy life one may see the traces of her intercession. Murillo was raised up by a happy providence to translate into great art the tender devotion of a people and to make real and glowing in imperishable color a nation's tender love for the Queen of Heaven. Innocent in his life, pure and tranquil in thought and deed, devoted to his native place and to the people for whom he painted, he gained so lasting a place

in their hearts that to this day the people of Seville, when they wish to speak of a consummate work of art, call it a Murillo.

This gentle painter was singularly blessed both by nature, by fortune, and by the love of his own folk. It is true that his youth and early manhood knew the taste of hardship and poverty. He was born of a poor family. His parents both died of an epidemic when he was but eleven years of age, and he and his sister were left to the care of his uncle, a barber named Lagares. The little lad showed an early talent for drawing and painting, and so he was put as a non-paying apprentice in the studio of Juan del Castillo, a painter of his native town, who was no great artist himself but who had some skill as a teacher. Here the young Murillo cleaned brushes, stretched canvas and mixed colors at his master's bidding and picked up betweenwhiles some principles of his art. His first paintings were hard and flat, like those of Castillo himself, and it was no unmixed misfortune that this latter worthy went off to Cadiz when Murillo was twenty-three years of age and left him to shift for himself and for his sister.

They were very poor and without friends or influence, and so young Murillo took to a way of living which was congenial enough to his taste and perhaps, in the last results, not unfavorable to his art. To eke out the few and poor commissions for paintings which he received from monasteries or churches he set to work to paint the rude pictures called "*sargas*," popular in that day and which young painters used to peddle at the *Feria* or weekly fair held on every Thursday in the Macarena of Seville. This Macarena is a slum on the outskirts of the city, and the painters used not only to take their work there for sale but would sit on the sidewalk and paint to order whatever the prospective purchaser desired, turning out flower pieces and landscapes, sacred subjects and fanciful cascades according to the buyers' fancy. Such rapid work was not bad practice, in a way, for a young artist. Besides, as he sat on the sidewalk and waited for purchasers, Murillo's quick, observant eye took in the types about him and gathered many an idea which was to form the inspiration of future masterpieces. The little



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
In the Louvre, Paris
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ragamuffins of the Macarena seem in particular to have caught his fancy, for they grin and frolic on several of his later canvases.

But the day was approaching when the young Murilló was to be stirred with a loftier ambition than that of a sidewalk artist. His friend and former fellow-apprentice Pedro de Moya, of Grenada, who is called the soldier artist, came back from the Low Countries, where he had been soldiering it in the army of Flanders and copying pictures in the intervals of his military duty. Moya showed Murillo the cartoons, drawings, copies and engravings of the masters which he had brought with him, and the sight stirred Murillo to new desires. Then Moya went to study under Van Dyck, in England, and when he returned to Spain in half a year with copies of the lovely lights and exquisite coloring of Van Dyck, Murillo was roused to a resolve to visit Rome or Flanders and see for himself the masterpieces. Penniless as he was, however, he saw on second thought that so long a journey was beyond him. But he resolved to go at least to Madrid, where Velasquez, the king's painter, was a master who could open up to him the higher reaches of his art. To get the money for this journey Murillo purchased a quantity of saga cloth, a rough sort of bunting used for the "*sargas*" or cheap paintings sold at the fairs, cut it up into marketable sizes, primed the pieces and painted on them the pictures which he had found most popular in the market place. Then he sold these paintings to a ship owner who was sending a cargo to South America, pocketed the money, left his sister in good care and set off to walk to Madrid.

One can fancy the first interview which this ardent young artist had with the courtly old Velasquez, painter of courts and kings. The youngster of the market place who had been born in the Jewish quarter of Seville, the meanest part of the city, and knew nothing of the society of the courtly and the great, sought the aid of lordly Velasquez, whose converse was with lofty and noble folk. Yet the old man received his young fellow-citizen kindly—for he also had been born in Seville—took him in charge and offered him a place in his own house, secured him entrance into the great gal-



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
In the Prado Museum, Madrid
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leries of Madrid, the Alcazar, the Escorial and the rest, and fathered him in his art by wise criticism, skilful instruction and experienced counsel. It is a charming episode, indeed, in the history of art to see this veteran of the brush, the familiar of kings, wealthy, powerful and established in fame, showing so munificent a friendship to the young artist who was to be his peer and fellow at the head of the great painters of Spain.

The three years which Murillo spent in Madrid brought him to so high a pitch of excellence that the munificent Velasquez, on his return with the court from the triumph of Lerida, in 1644, urged him to go to Rome, and offered money for the journey and letters of introduction. But Murillo declined to leave his native land, and returned to his beloved Seville never to depart again, so far as history tells, until that fatal journey to Cadiz on which he met his death. So that Spain's best beloved painter never in all his life set foot off the soil of Spain.

Murillo's apprentice days were over now and so was the time of his obscurity and hardships. No sooner had he come back to Seville than the friars of the Franciscan Convent employed him to paint eleven large pictures for their cloister. They took this unknown artist because they had only a small price to give, which had been collected by one of their mendicant friars, and was not enough to tempt one of the well-known painters of Seville. But Murillo was glad to accept the friars' offer, and the eleven pictures which he painted made the Franciscan Convent of Seville famous the whole world over and established Murillo at one sudden leap in the very hearts of his enthusiastic countrymen. In a trice the cloister was thronged with visitors; crowds of artists and critics mingled with the people and spread abroad the fame of this new luminary, suddenly become the most popular painter of Seville. Commissions began to pour in upon Murillo for altar pieces, series of religious paintings and adornments for the walls and ceilings of churches and monasteries. The Andalusia of those days could afford richly to reward its favorite. From that time the future of Murillo was assured.



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
In the Prado Museum, Madrid



THE MIRACLE OF ST. DIEGO
In the Louvre, Paris


But this sudden prosperity, which might have turned the head of many a young sprig, did not at all disturb the deep piety and sound humility of the painter. He continued his even way, devoted, industrious, laboring at his pictures with the spirit alike of artistic fidelity and religious zeal. By the year 1648 he had risen to so high a position that he could wed a rich and noble lady, named Dona Beatriz de Cabrera y Soto Mayor. She seems to have been as good as she was noble and well-to-do. Murillo's household was full of peace and piety. Two of his sons became priests, one of them coming to America, though of his doings here little is known. His daughter became a Dominican nun in the convent of the Mother of God. As for Murillo himself, his devotion seems to have increased with the years. "He became one of the most pious of men," says one author, "and spent hours daily in prayer. He was amiable and gentle in his disposition, yet subject to occasional quick fits of passion and gusty impulses, as was natural to the oriental blood of Andalusia.

"There is no shadow resting on his fair fame; and his personal life was altogether unexceptionable. His diligence never failed, and his determination to excel did not falter; and through his splendid powers of application he was enabled to lay a broad foundation for the rising fabric of his genius. During his later years the lifelong piety of Murillo became even more pronounced; and he was accustomed to remain in the church often from midday until twilight, lost in devout reveries, and forgetting the outer world and its toiling activities. He had always been eminent for his charities and liberal bounty to the poor; and when he died, all the money which he possessed was seventy crowns. He lived as he painted, between saints and beggars, and transferred the riches which he received on account of the one to the aid and uplifting of the other."

His dealings with those about him and his self-expression in his art were of a piece with his personal character. His career, says one of his historians, is a story of "persisting toil, sincere faith, loving friendship, and large-hearted kindness." He rejoiced in the



THE ESPOUSALS OF ST. CATHERINE
In the Vatican, Rome

achievements of his fellow artists, he was a kind and unwearying instructor to young artists and a friend upon whose fidelity and goodness all relied. When he died the prayers and lamentations of the people were unending. To this day he is the dearest son of Seville, one of those few men who have so captured the hearts of their citizens that not only to admire but to love them is an enduring tradition. His friends bewailed his loss as though they had been his children. He left a name without stain, the memory of a life without reproach. Truly a worthy reward for one whose art was given so whole-heartedly to the service of Catholic devotion and to the honor of God, His Blessed Mother and the saints. 

Murillo's death was as peaceful as his life. Persuaded at last to leave his native city for Cadiz to paint five pictures for the Church of the Capuchin Friars there, he was engaged upon the principal composition, an altar piece representing the espousal of St. Catherine, when, so the story goes, as he was one day climbing a scaffolding to reach the upper part of the canvas, he stumbled so violently as to cause a rupture. Palomino tells us that his natural modesty kept him from speaking of the injury until he was compelled to give over working and return home to Seville, where he rapidly grew worse. He expired in the arms of his friend and patron Father Justino Neve, and his second son, the young Gaspar, with his pupil Villavicenzio, were also by his death-bed. During the long days of his agonizing illness Murillo used to have himself borne into the parish church of Santa Cruz, where he would pray before his favorite picture, a painting of the Descent from the Cross by Pedro Campaña. He loved this picture greatly, and of his own wish his body was laid beneath it. Ponz tells the story that one day he was asked why he was looking so long and expectantly at the picture. "I am waiting," he answered, "until those men shall have brought down the body of our Blessed Lord from the cross."

Murillo's funeral was celebrated, of course, with great pomp and solemnity. Two marquesses and four knights bore his bier. A great concourse of people of all ranks attended. Thus was laid



THE MADONNA AND ST. ANNE
In the Prado Museum, Madrid

to rest the mortal part of the good painter whose soul has long since, we may confidently hope, enjoyed the heavenly vision of that Immaculate Queen, whose image he so often and so marvelously portrayed for earthly eyes. Murillo, despite the many excellent prices he had received for his pictures during forty years before his death, did not die a rich man. Yet, out of what he had, he left instructions that four hundred masses should be said for the repose of his soul. His wife had died before him. But his two sons and daughter and the sister whom he had cared for so tenderly in his youth survived him. The sister had married a hidalgo of Burgos, afterwards Chief Secretary of State for Spain. This worthy took Murillo's younger son, Gaspar, under his patronage and had him made a canon of Seville. The young canon was a painter and became a fair imitator of his father's style.

It is a curious fact that the surpassing beauty of Murillo's art, and in general of the art of Spain, was almost unknown outside the boundaries of his native land for nearly two hundred years. Strangely enough, it was only the thieving rapacity of Napoleon's plundering generals Soult and Sebastiani that took these glorious pictures out of the obscurity in which they had lain, and spread them through the galleries of Europe. In one instance, at least, this unconscionable robbery had good results. Of the eleven pictures which Murillo painted for the Franciscans and which were the beginning of his fame Soult carried off all but one, which was too stiff to roll up. In 1810 the Franciscan Convent itself was destroyed by fire, so this pillaging of Soult really preserved to the world the master's first great achievements. It would be amusing to read of the bare-faced robberies perpetrated by these plundering marshals were not their unconscionable rapacity so shocking. Thus Richard Ford tells that when Soult was showing a guest his own picture gallery in Paris he stopped before a picture by Murillo and said: "I very much value that, as it saved the lives of two estimable persons." Thereupon an aid-de-camp whispered to the guest: "He threatened to have both shot on the spot unless they gave up the picture."



THE CHILDREN OF THE SHELL
In the Prado, Madrid

Soult's taste was as good, however, as his methods were evil, and the result of this plundering was to amaze Europe with the work of the master who for two hundred years had inspired the pious meditations of religious in quiet cloisters or stirred the simple faithful to devotion from the walls of convents and of churches. Perhaps, indeed, those two hundred years during which his work served only for piety and devotion were an answer to the prayers of Murillo, who would far rather have stirred the devout to fervor than have gained the barren applause of self-sufficient critics from the cold walls of museums and galleries.

Indeed the commentaries of these self-same critics would have stirred Murillo to tears and laughter. He is so imbued with faith and devotion, so characteristically Catholic in all his religious work, that his critics show their bias by ridiculous comments in which the word mysticism is misused, the mystery of the Immaculate Conception pitifully misunderstood, and the whole spirit of Catholic Spain distorted and misconceived. We have not the patience to transcribe any of these ludicrous observations. They offer, however, another very telling instance of the incapacity of the nonbeliever to enter into the spirit of Catholic art to a full degree. Only, one could wish that those critics who lack the faith which would give them comprehension did not lack the modesty to refrain from criticizing what they cannot properly understand. Yet there are not wanting some critics who can comprehend the greatness of Murillo's art.

The museum of the Prado is, quite naturally, the depositary of the richest collection of Murillo's paintings that we saw in Europe. In the rooms devoted to him one meets a charming assemblage of his works. The pictures of the Immaculate Conception in particular are of ravishing beauty. One seized our attention above the rest. It represents the Virgin with an air of extraordinary youthfulness and is called by the Spaniards "La Niña," the Maiden. Not only do words fail to convey the radiance and loveliness of this charming vision of youth, purity and holiness, but it is one of the pictures which brings to the gazer a conviction that no copies do



THE CHILD ST. JOHN
In the Prado, Madrid



THE DIVINE SHEPHERD
In the Prado Museum, Madrid

it justice. There are some masterpieces which lend themselves very well to reproduction. Photographs catch admirably the spirit of the painting. But this exquisite work of Murillo has so ethereal and delicate a beauty that it eludes the copyist and the camera. One must go to Madrid and stand before it to realize its thrilling and unearthly loveliness.

Louis Gillet, writing in the Catholic Encyclopedia, has this to say of Murillo's pictures of the Immaculate Conception: "It is a remarkable fact that these pictures, which represent the most transcendental spiritual action, are the most thoroughly feminine paintings in Spain. But for religious representations of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, indeed, woman is almost absent from Spanish painting. The most famous portraits of women, the *infantas* or *meninas* of Velasquez, retain nothing of feminine charm, they are simulacra and phantoms without verisimilitude. Side by side with these apparitions Murillo's Virgins produce a comforting effect of relief. Here are women, true and vital, with the most thoroughly external charms of their sex. In them the impulse of love rises to ecstasy, and without Murillo Spanish painting would be deprived of its most beautiful love poems."

It is rather an exaggeration to say, as does Gillet in the passage just quoted, that with the exception of representations of the Madonna and the saints woman is almost absent from Spanish painting. Yet one can thoroughly agree with him that in the Madonnas of Murillo are united the most heavenly beauty with womanly charm, just as in the Blessed Virgin herself is joined the most womanly tenderness and sweetness with the ecstatic heights of holiness and dignity.

"Murillo," says Sir David Wilkie, "adapting the higher subjects of art to the commonest understanding, seems, of all painters, the most universal favorite."

One realizes the complete devotion of Murillo to religious painting when one learns that he never painted a scene from history, even from those rich heroic annals of which the Spaniards of the southern province are so proud. The legends of the Cid, the



THE VISION OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
In the Cathedral, Seville



"ECCE HOMO"
In the Richmond Gallery



THE SORROWFUL MOTHER
In the Prado, Madrid

stories of Cervantes, Lopez de Vega and Calderon, the wars with the Moors, the scenes of the discovery and conquest of America never attracted him. Still less did those classic themes in which the imagination of some other great painters ran riot. His brush was for the simple street scenes of Seville and for the inhabitants of heaven. Viardo thus enthusiastically sums up his achievements:

“Murillo comes up, in every respect, to what our imagination could hope or conceive. His earthly daylight is perfectly natural and true; his heavenly day is full of radiance. We find in the attitude of the saints, and the expression of their features, all that the most ardent piety, all that the most passionate exaltation, can feel or express in extreme surprise, delight, and adoration. As for the visions, they appear with all the pomp of a celestial train, in which are marvelously grouped the different spirits of the immortal hierarchy, from the archangel with outspread wings to the bodiless heads of the cherubim. It is in these scenes of supernatural poetry that the pencil of Murillo, like the wand of an enchanter, produces marvels. If, in scenes taken from human life, he equals the greatest colorists, he is alone in the imaginary scenes of eternal life. It might be said of the two great Spanish masters, that Velasquez is the painter of the earth, and Murillo of heaven.”

So, too, the modern critics; we have these fervent words from the pen of Edmondo de Amicis:

“Murillo is not only a great painter, but has a great soul; is more than a glory; is, in fact, an object of affection for Spain; he is more than a sovereign master of the beautiful, he is a benefactor, one who inspires good actions, and a lovely image which, once found in his canvases, is borne in one's heart throughout life with a feeling of gratitude and religious devotion. He is one of those men of whom an indescribable prophetic sentiment tells us that we shall see them again; that the next meeting with them is due to us like some prize; that they cannot have disappeared forever, they are still in some place; that their life has only been like a flash of inextinguishable light, which must appear once more in all its splendor to the eyes of mortals.



THE HOLY FAMILY
In the Louvre, Paris



THE ANNUNCIATION
In the Prado Museum, Madrid

"In art Velasquez is an eagle, Murillo an angel. We admire the former and worship the latter. His canvases make him known as if he had lived with us. He was handsome, good, and pious; many knew not where to touch him; around his crown of glory he bore one of love. He was born to paint the sky. Fate had given him a peaceful and serene genius, which bore him heavenward on the wings of a placid inspiration; and yet his most admirable pictures breathe an air of modest sweetness, which inspires sympathy and affection even before wonder. A simple and noble elegance of outline, an expression full of vivacity and grace, an ineffable harmony of color, are the points which strike one at first sight; but the longer one looks at them, the more one discovers in them, and astonishment is transformed, little by little, into a sweet feeling of gladness. His saints have a benign expression that cheers and consoles one; his angels, whom he groups with a marvelous mastery, make one's lips tremble with a desire to kiss them; his virgins, clothed in white and enveloped in their blue mantles, with their great black eyes, their folded hands so willowy, slight, and aerial in appearance, make one's heart tremble with sweetness and one's eyes fill with tears. He combines the truth of Velasquez with the vigorous effects of Ribera, the harmonious transparency of Titian and the brilliant vivacity of Rubens."

Thus speak these authors, carried away by the genuineness and excellence of Murillo's art. But, as with so many other great Catholic originals, one has need to be a Catholic one's self and imbued with the spirit of the Faith quite thoroughly to understand the meaning of their masterpieces. Those precise persons who speak so particularly of the three styles of Murillo, *el frio* or the cold, *el calido* or the warm, and *el vaporoso* or the misty, may really know not near so much about the true meaning of his genius as did the pious, humble souls for whom he worked. They read with instant comprehension the height of dignity and depths of motherliness which he painted into the countenances of those heavenly Madonnas which were the open book wherein the people saw recorded, their own intense devotion toward her. Murillo's Madon-



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



MADONNA OF THE NAPKIN
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

nas are his country's supreme offering to her who was more than the national patron, who was the mother of their nation, and to love and reverence whom was, after the love and reverence of her Son, the ruling passion of Catholic Spain.

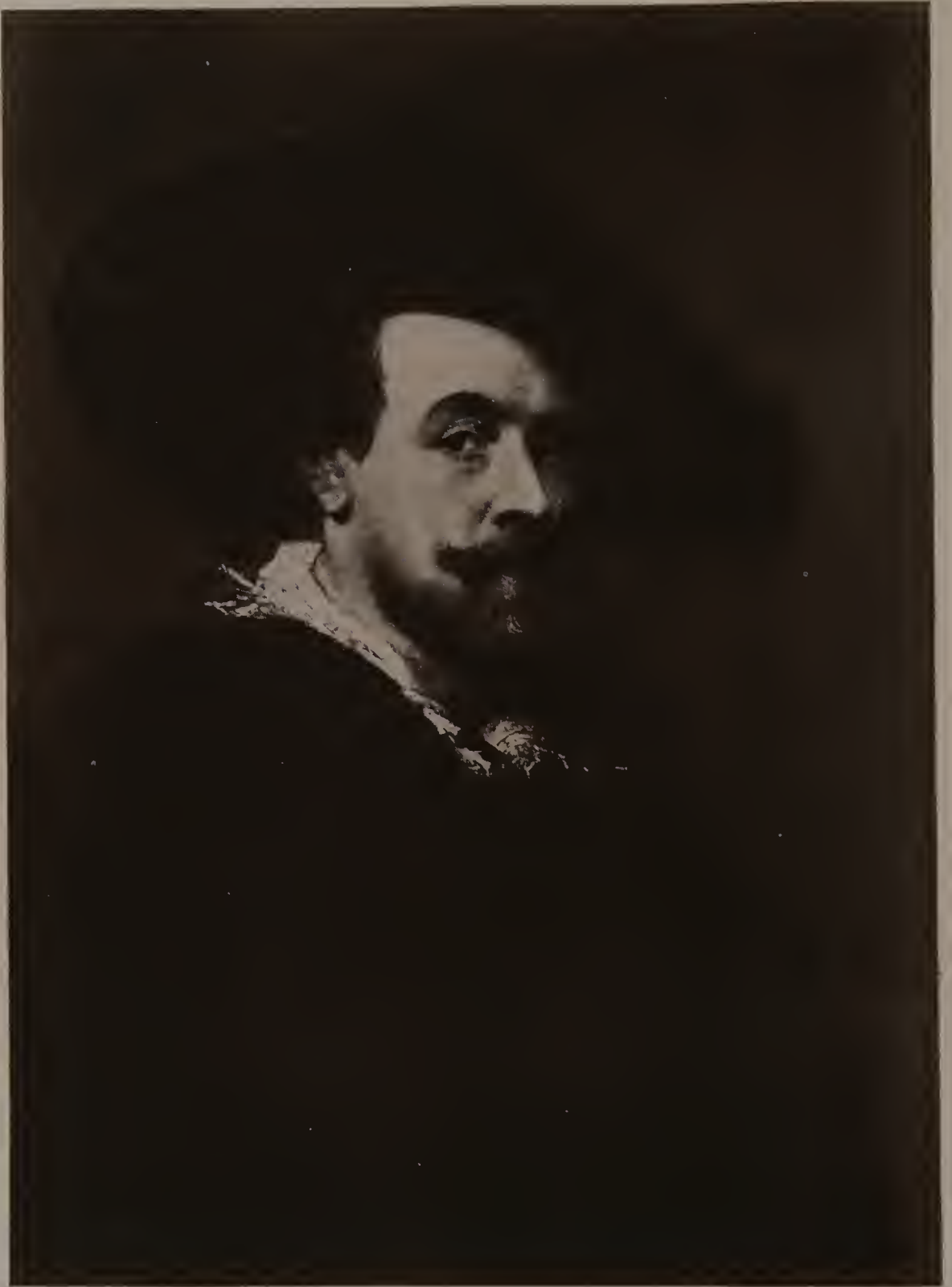
Happy painter of the Immaculate, on whom descended in so large a degree those special blessings which Mary is accustomed to give to her favorite children, purity of soul, innocence of life, the peace that passes all understanding, a tender love of God, a feeling of charity to the neighbor, and at last that peaceful and holy end which is the beginning of a life immortal. Doubtless the pious painter, as he knelt whole afternoons before the altar of the Virgin, imagining her spotless loveliness, or toiled in his studio during laborious days to set his lovely imaginings on canvas, valued this peace of soul and innocence of spirit far more than the misty and distant fame which he may have foreseen would be his own in future ages. He cared far more to paint the soul of Catholic Spain into his pictures than he did to win the captious hearts of critics or the cold praise of coming generations. What title, then, can we offer him more germane to his art and more honorable to his achievement than that of the limner of the Madonna, painter par excellence of Mary Immaculate?

PETER PAUL RUBENS



WE have seen a very interesting procession of great painters pass by upon our little stage. Beginning with Leonardo da Vinci, that primate of artists whose universal genius made him a type of the culture of the Renaissance, we have looked in turn at the charming Raphael who in his brilliant youth crowded a long life of great artistic triumphs; at Michelangelo, the stupendous genius whose works affect us with awe even in their photographic miniatures; at Fra Angelico the pure and delightful character whose pictures came, nearer perhaps, to limning the celestial bliss than those of any other who ever put brush into color; at the pious Murillo, worthy interpreter of the religious soul of Spain, whose tender and vivid Madonnas are the delight of all devout folk, even though they are not deeply learned in art.

Of a somewhat later day, yet rivaling in his time the great originals, we come now to speak of a painter whose personal character and career are likewise of an engrossing interest—Peter Paul Rubens, artist, courtier, diplomat, he of the stupendous canvases, who boasted that no scene was too great nor figures too crowded for his skill, the lover of bright colors, the founder of the Baroque art of Belgium, who from his studio, as from a workshop, poured out upon Europe a most amazing number of masterful creations. This same painter, Peter Paul Rubens, at sight of some of whose vast and sometimes, alas, not decorous pictures our readers may have gasped with surprise, seen in some foreign gallery—this same Peter Paul was in his private life a most edifying citizen. He was a faithful Sodalist, a devout attendant at daily mass, a warm friend of the Jesuits of his native land, a faithful child of the Church, a model father and devoted husband, a patriot who rendered faithful service to his country, a friend loyal and kind, and in fine a man on whose personal character no stain has fallen.



SELF-PORTRAIT OF PETER PAUL RUBENS
In the Uffizi, Florence

Add to this that he had during his life the most splendid success, was illustrious no less as a diplomat and ambassador than as a painter, dwelt in quite majestic state in a great house filled with works of art, which house he had himself built and furnished, and where he lived surrounded by a large school of pupils by whose aid he multiplied his masterpieces, finally died at the height of his career before the infirmities of old age had touched him, and one can form some notion of the splendor of his work and the variety of his achievements. Some hundred families of name in Europe claim connection with him. His paintings are the greatest pride of the galleries of the Low Countries. Withal, he lived and died a Catholic gentleman. Surely these are claims to a sympathetic study of his life and his work.

Yet, for all this, one cannot recommend the study of all of Rubens' works. They are unfortunately not all *pueris virginibusque*. It is indeed a source of keen regret that this great man, whose personal life was so good and innocent, used his brush at times on scenes that shock the taste of many prudent people. Doubtless this friend of the Church, this good citizen and good father, this pious man who began his work each day with Holy Mass, did not judge that his work would be an occasion of scandal to others. Still it is well to utter a general warning, and then we may turn aside from the less edifying productions of Rubens' brush to consider the life of the man himself and some of those great religious paintings which by themselves would make his name immortal.

"There is hardly a gallery in Europe," says Hope Rea, in a book on Peter Paul Rubens, to which we make due acknowledgments, "having any claim to distinction, which does not preserve one or more works ascribed to the great Fleming, Peter Paul Rubens. Rubens' paintings alone, excluding the designs for engravings, number over a thousand, and embrace almost every class of subject capable of artistic handling, whether sacred or profane. Further, the manner of treatment is as varied as are the subjects. We have compositions in the loftiest style, transfused with the grand Re-

naissance spirit; on the other hand we have subjects of the utmost coarseness, depicted unfalteringly, without reserve or bound, the last word frankly said; we have love of nature, shown in tenderest landscape, and most subtle portraiture; and again, instances of pure *genre*, and further still, acres of decorative canvas, inspired, as it would seem to modern eyes, by sycophancy alone.

“Before this mass of material, so contradictory in the varying impressions it produces, the observer who tries to gain some acquaintance with the master must often turn away bewildered or forced to the unsatisfying conclusion that Rubens is an enigma, a genius not to be comprehended, and moreover so repellent in certain aspects of his art that, even where he is indubitably great, admiration arises almost with reluctance. A riddle, however, presupposes a solution; and it should be remembered that it is possible for a character, while being very complex, to be at the same time exceedingly transparent. That such was the case with Rubens we shall discover if we allow ourselves to trace with sufficient patience the various threads which together make up the web of the great painter’s personality; in so doing we may also find, if that be our desire, a solution to the enigma of his apparently self-contradicting art.”

The researches of many writers have fixed the fact that Rubens was born in the little German town of Siegen, in the year of our Lord 1577. He had a very excellent and noble-minded mother, to whose training he doubtless owed in great measure that sterling Catholicity and uprightness of character which he shows throughout his whole life. Though his father seems to have become a Protestant his mother kept her Catholic faith, and on the death of his father, whose conduct had plunged her into much sorrow and difficulty, his mother took her children back to Antwerp, where the little Peter Paul was sent to school. There is a story that one of his chief amusements at this time was to copy the illustrations from a large family Bible. However this may be, the notion of becoming a painter seems to have fixed itself in the mind of the lad Peter Paul at a very early age. Still, at the age of thirteen he was



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
In the Louvre, Paris

removed from school and sent to be a page in the house of the Countess van Lalaing. This lady was the wife of a former governor of Antwerp, and lived in considerable state, her house being a sort of miniature court, where courtly manners and etiquette were much insisted on. Doubtless Rubens owed his after success as a courtier to the polished address and gentle manners he got at the Countess van Lalaing's. "But unable to resist the inclination which urged him to painting," says Sandraart, one of his earliest biographers and a personal friend of Rubens, "he at length obtained from his mother permission to devote himself to it."

"His first master was a family connection, Tobias Verhaecht, whose name has only remained known through the fact of his having had Rubens for a pupil. He had the unconscious enjoyment of this honor for six months only, after which, for reasons not recorded, the lad passed on to the studio of a more notable artist by name Adam van Noort. The popular legend respecting this latter is that he was a coarse-mannered boor, who treated his apprentices with severity, and painted pictures in the uncompromisingly ugly Flemish style, missing alike the earlier delicacy of the schools of Van Eyck and Van de Weyden and the later suavities of the contemporary Italianizers. So many doubts, however, have been cast on these statements, both as regards the character of the man and his work, by recent criticism, that we may well for the present leave aside the question of Van Noort, pending further research. This much we do know, that Rubens, the brilliant lad of fourteen, fresh from the position of page in a courtly house, remained his pupil for four years, and learned from him the elements of the painter's craft. At the end of this time the boy moved on to another teacher, Otto van Veen, known also as Vaenius, it being a fashionable affectation of the time to Latinize surnames, with the idea of thereby adding to their distinction. Thus we find one of Rubens' chief engravers generally spoken of as Pontius, his real name being Du Pont.

"Of Van Veen, in contrast to Van Noort, we have abundant and reliable information. He was the leading painter in Antwerp of



THE HOLY FAMILY
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

his day, a scholar and a gentleman, much under the influence of Italy, where he had traveled in his earlier years. His style was somewhat academic, and his genius not being of an original order, his productions were tame rather than striking. They nevertheless had qualities which raised them far above the contemporary work of the school; so that probably nowhere else in Antwerp, at that time, could Rubens have found more favorable conditions under which to pursue his studies and make his own experiments. For Van Veen was a generous master, absolutely devoid of jealousy, and apparently rejoicing in the developing genius of his pupil. The whole atmosphere of the house and circle of the elder man was such as to encourage refinement of feeling, general culture, and, above all, appreciation of Italy, the fountainhead of Renaissance art and scholarship.

"Two years after his entrance into the Van Veen studio Rubens was received into the Guild of St. Luke, being thus acknowledged as a duly qualified member of his profession. The following year he was chosen to assist his master in the state decoration of the city to celebrate the formal entrance of the new rulers of the obedient provinces, the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. His training and experience was thus, we see, as full and varied as Van Veen could make it. In short, it is on record that the latter 'told his pupil all he knew.' His first masters were painters of Antwerp, but he soon outgrew their instructions, and in the spring of the new century, in the month of May, 1600, he turned his steps to sunny Italy, there to seek the inspiration and training which that great center of art then offered to the world."

He was then twenty-three years of age, and he remained in Italy for eight years, from 1600 to 1608. It is interesting to learn that the first city in that colorful land in which Rubens delayed was the most brilliant of them all, Venice, Queen of the Sea, where the loveliness of life and the splendor of art must both have stirred to tremendous enthusiasm this genius from the cold North, who had perhaps never before even dreamed of so various and majestic a city as Venice then was. Speaking of the Venice of Titian's time,

Osker Fischel says: "In the city of canals, every step brought him to a new picture. It was then a mart for all nations, and the whole city, from the Turkish Fondaco to the Rialto, and from the Rialto to the Riva de Schiavoni, was rich in the splendor of colors. Dresses, cloths, carpets, all of highly variegated tints met the eye everywhere. A taste for color was seen even in the architecture of the city, and the great St. Mark's was built of many-colored antique marble from the Levant, overspun with gold mosaic. It was quite common to cover the marble of the facades of the churches and palaces with colors, and even the plainest of structures was adorned with glazed stone. The pursuit of painting in a city of this character seems the most natural of pursuits." When Rubens entered this splendid place it was scarcely less brilliant than in Titian's day. Doubtless his eager eyes drank in, his faithful memory recalled, this variety of colors, to be poured forth again in the splendor of his own pictures in time to come.

To Venice came in July of 1600 Vincenzo Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua. One of his gentlemen met Rubens, who showed him some of his paintings. The courtier brought him to Vincenzo, who, pleased alike by the work and the painter, took him into his service, and thus for eight years Rubens had a place to live and a patron. This was the beginning of the courtly service of Rubens, whose princely employers were never satisfied with using him as an artist alone, but always entrusted him with some affairs of state, recognizing his admirable address and talent for the transaction of affairs as well as for wielding the brush. The Duke Vincenzo hurried from Venice to Florence to assist at the marriage of his sister-in-law, Marie de Medici, to Henry IV of France. The splendid celebrations on this occasion were witnessed by Rubens, whose eyes also drank in the beauty of Florence. Thence the Duke went to Genoa, the city of palaces, where he made a lengthened stay, and not until about Christmas time did he settle down at home in Mantua.

Needless to say, all this journeying from city to city in the lovely land of Italy was a great pleasure and no little advantage

to Rubens. Genoa seems to have impressed him more than Florence, appealing as it did with its magnificent architecture to the taste of his time, of which Rubens had the preferences and standards. The court of Mantua itself was a center of learning and art since the days of Isabella d'Este, and artists of high skill had left masterpieces in its palaces—Andrea Mantegna had decorated the old palace and Giulio Romano the pleasure house. To both of these masters Rubens gave devoted study. Besides, he assisted at the ceremonial merry-makings, hunts, pageants, plays, receptions, and all the splendid gaieties which the princess of the Renaissance so loved.

The court of Mantua was a typical court of the Renaissance, where art, learning, diplomacy, courtesy and gentle speech were studied as arts. Rubens became a master in these as well as in the art of the brush. But, as Rea remarks, it is to his everlasting credit that while the ordinary courtier adopted the life of the court as a career out of which he expected to carve his fortune, Rubens remained always a painter by profession, and when he acted as courtier he did it from a disinterested motive to serve his sovereign and his country.

In the summer of 1601 the Duke Vincenzo went to fight the Turk, and he sent Rubens with a letter of introduction to the Cardinal Montalto at Rome. Thither went the artist in August and made his first acquaintance with the Roman masterpieces. Space forbids to trace in detail the events of Rubens' eight years in Italy. He was sent by the Duke Vincenzo to carry his gifts to the King of Spain. He was commissioned to paint any beauty of the court whom he could persuade to sit for her portrait to be added to the Mantuan collection. Doubtless, too, he acted as commissioner for his princely master in collecting those madonnas which the latter was most eager to assemble at his palaces. He received also some commissions in Rome. But his brother Philip had been obliged to return to Antwerp in April of 1607, because of ill news about their mother's health. In October, 1608, news reached Peter Paul of his mother's still increasing illness, and like a loving son, he too set out

for home. Alas, when he reached Antwerp he learned that the good mother was already dead. At the persuasion of his brother, Peter Paul decided that Antwerp was a better field for his activities than Mantua, and so he respectfully severed his connection with the Duke Vincenzo and cast his fortunes among his own people.

The twelve years' truce with the United Provinces was just beginning, and Antwerp after years of desolation and anxiety was about to experience a period of rest and reconstruction. The houses of the best society of the city, artistic and literary, opened at once to Rubens. He immediately received commissions for paintings, and from this time on, with the splendid technique and thorough knowledge of his profession which he had acquired in Italy, the young painter began a brilliant career, which never knew any eclipse until his death. He was now thirty-two years of age, and on the eighth of October, 1609, he married his first wife, Isabelle Brant, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Jan Brant, a prominent citizen of Antwerp. There is a charming picture painted by Rubens of himself and his bride in their arbor. Indeed, in all his family relations with his wife, his children and his brothers, Rubens seems to have been most happy.

It was about this time, also, that two of his most splendid paintings at Antwerp were executed, the Elevation of Christ on the Cross and the Deposition or Descent from the Cross. Both of these magnificent compositions are still to be seen in the Cathedral at Antwerp. In the Erection of the Cross a group of nine men are uniting their efforts to heave up and to put in place the cross to which Christ is nailed. The task is half done, and the tremendous strain on all their muscles is in terrific contrast with the patient repose of the body of the Savior. "All these men," says Max Rooses, "are doing their utmost pushing, heaving, pulling, uniting all their strength in a singular effort to raise the enormous cross with the weight of Christ upon it. The Savior is aloft in the midst of them. His calm and sweetness contrast with their roughness and the immobility of His outstretched body with their twisted and



THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS
In the Cathedral, Antwerp

contracted limbs." The face of the Savior in this picture is one of the most sublime presentments to be found in all art. As Rooses further remarks, the work is so unified and stupendous that it might seem to be the result of an inspiration. But on the contrary, we see from the drawings and studies for this work that it was the result of long planning and effort on the part of the painter. He borrowed several figures from another Elevation of the Cross which he had painted in 1602 for the Church of Santa Croce, Rome. But this picture of 1610 is endlessly better than that of 1602.

"Rubens" says Rooses, "never painted this subject again. For him it was done with, exhausted. He had painted physical effort and brute passion in their highest and lowest. To attempt to picture them again under another form would inevitably have been to picture them under a weaker form. The artists of the succeeding generation were of his opinion on that point. They never attempted so rash an enterprise. Van Dyck, who risked it on a day that he should have marked with a black stone, produced a caricature which would have been enough by itself to discourage any new attempts."

As to the Descent from the Cross, which is also in the Cathedral of Antwerp, it is said to stand at the outset of the second period of Rubens' artistic career. This picture was ordered of him by the Guild of the Arquebusiers of Antwerp for its altar in the church. The patron saint of the Arquebusiers was St. Christopher, and it was his story which supplied the motive of the painting. Rubens elected to put the legend of St. Christopher in a subordinate place, and for the center panel he chose the Descent from the Cross. "The sentiment springing from the whole picture," says Rooses, "is one of affection and respectful solicitude. The unity and harmony of the composition are marvelous; the Christ dominates everything; all are crowded around Him, to Him all eyes are directed, all arms outstretched. Towards Him flows the tenderness of all these souls no less than the action of all these bodies. His whiteness, chilled by tints of bluish gray, and the pale warmth of the tone of the shroud dominate the varied coloring of the living,



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS
In the Cathedral, Antwerp

the graceful lines of his sorrowful silhouette make an admirable contrast with their strained action and poignant emotions."

One can see the two great masterpieces of Rubens which are the treasures of the Cathedral of Antwerp only at stated hours when the Cathedral is closed to the faithful and when the veils which usually hang before these two great pictures are removed for the benefit of visitors. The pictures hang at either side of the altar. Going from one to the other and gazing alternately upon the Ascent and the Descent from the Cross, we could not sufficiently admire the strength and beauty of these masterpieces. The tremendous power of conception and execution, the vigor of action, the vividness of coloring of the great master charms and impresses in either painting.

In Louvain again, before the Crucifixion of St. Peter where the same qualities shine forth, though perhaps in a less impressive degree, we were moved to wonder at the robust vigor of Rubens and the physical power, if one may so speak, of his paintings.

"We cannot imagine the Descent from the Cross otherwise than as Rubens conceived it. He discovered the unforgettable, unchangeable and definite form under which, as in a melodious and touching dirge, this final episode of the Passion was to be celebrated."

About this time Rubens purchased a house and altered it to afford him a studio and a place for his collection of arts and antiques. Children were born to him there, Clara, Albert, and Nicholas. He gathered about him a number of co-workers and set himself to the task of giving to Antwerp those adornments of beauty and splendor for which she cried out after the years of devastation she had been suffering. It is amusing to read of the intense and almost unbelievable artistic activity in Rubens' well-organized studio. In addition to his other extraordinary gifts he had a remarkable capacity for business, and he employed the well-known apprentice system of the day to systematize his artistic work. Students rushed to him from all quarters. Selecting the best of these he began to organize them to help him in his work.



THE CHRIST ON THE CROSS
In the Louvre, Paris

"He gradually trained them up," says Rea, "in his methods of applying and combining the pigments, until in their own special departments their touch became hardly distinguishable from his own. One pupil, for example, would always be employed in painting animals; another on any landscape that might be introduced into the picture; a third would paint the fruit and flowers, and so on; the finer and more expressive parts, together with, of course, the composition of the whole, being left for the master himself, though the exact proportion of his work in the painting would be a matter of arrangement at the time of undertaking the commission. For this co-operative method of picture production was prosecuted with the utmost frankness, a regular tariff being arranged, and intending patrons being given clearly to understand what they were to expect for the sum which they were prepared to expend; so much of Rubens' own work for so much cash; for so much less cash a proportionately greater amount of assistants' work, down to the degree of having the design alone furnished by the master, the actual painting being entirely by other hands. In addition to his pupils, it became necessary at times to employ regular assistants also, men who had already acquired reputations of their own."

The same author gives an amusing instance of Rubens' methods. "As regards the other and less noted collaborators and the method of their working, we may gather some idea from the following story, which appears to be very characteristic of what has been termed the House of Rubens and Co. It is recorded that a Last Supper had been ordered from the master by the authorities of the cathedral church of Malines. To the dismay of the dean, instead of the painter himself arriving on the day appointed, there appeared a young man named Justus von Egmont, bearing with him instructions to begin the work. To quote from Stevenson's suggestive monograph on Rubens: 'The dean or canon with some difficulty permitted the pupil to continue, but his fears were allayed when the great man appeared, with his fine calm presence and urbane manner that was a bulwark against offense and misappreciation. As Rubens corrected the work, enlivened the color and



THE MIRACLES OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
In the Imperial Picture Gallery, Vienna

the action of the figures, and swept the whole composition with his unerring brushwork towards a beautiful unity of effect, the churchman acknowledged the wisdom of the master, and admitted that the money of the chapter had been safely invested.' ”

Whole series of paintings were thus executed in Rubens' studio. The History of the Consul Decius Mus in ten cartoons for tapestry, in 1618; the decoration of the ceiling of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp, in 1620, which comprised fifty-six compositions; the History of Constantine in twelve compositions; and finally the famous series of the history of Marie de Medici. It was stipulated in the Jesuit series that Rubens was to make the drawings on a smaller scale, and the pupils, notably Van Dyck, were to execute them in full size. Two pictures of special interest among those which were done for the Church of the Jesuits at Antwerp are those of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, which must have been painted in the course of the year 1619, or the early part of 1620. They are mentioned by Rubens in a list of engravings on which he wished to get a copyright. In the Miracles of St. Ignatius he depicts the saint surrounded by his earliest followers invoking heaven's aid to exorcise some possessed persons. The calm, majestic attitude of the saint is in striking contrast to the contorted figures of the composition.

The Miracles of St. Francis Xavier, the companion piece of the Miracles of St. Ignatius, shows the saint standing before a pagan temple preaching to the infidels. “At the sound of his voice the idols fall from their pedestals; two dead come to life and burst their shrouds; the sick, the blind and the possessed were brought to him. The group in the foreground is compact, fine in movement and brilliant in color. The wan corpses awakening in the full light of day and the pale-hued flesh and multi-colored garments of the living give a very vivid impression” (Rooses).

Rubens also painted a later composition for the Jesuits called the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and the Return of the Holy Family Out of Egypt. No doubt this adornment of the Jesuit church of Antwerp was a labor of love for Rubens, as he was a



THE MIRACLES OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA
In the Church of St. Ambrogio, Genoa

very devoted friend of the Jesuits of the city and a faithful member and the secretary of the Sodality under their direction.

Rubens was thus kindling to artistic activity the whole city of Antwerp. Painters, sculptors, engravers, architects, scholars took fire with the splendor of his genius. He was also gradually getting into the sphere of politics and diplomacy, "in which," says Rea, "he played so real and conspicuous a part that it is recorded as the often expressed opinion of one of the great statesmen of the day, that he saw so many qualities shine in the artist that he believed his talent for painting to be the least of his gifts."

It would scarcely be interesting to our readers in this present chapter to trace out all the political negotiations in which Rubens as statesman took part in the service of the Archduchess Isabella. This wise princess had been left a widow in 1621 and it was her constant struggle to preserve peace in her country. She employed Rubens, therefore, on various diplomatic missions to France, Holland, Spain, some of which he undertook with the greater willingness because his beloved wife, Isabella, had been carried off by the plague in 1626. Some of the courts of Europe to which he was sent at first resented receiving as an envoy a man who was only an artist, but Rubens soon disarmed their animosity. Thus the King of Spain was unwilling to receive him, but we find Rubens very soon busy painting an equestrian portrait of his majesty, of whom he seems to have become a great friend. Indeed, when the courts saw the extent of his information and his faculty for business they were hardly willing to let him come home again, and when he took leave of the English King, Charles the First, that monarch, in recognition of his services, conferred on him the honor of knighthood, which, at the request of his own archduchess, was confirmed by Philip of Spain.

Isabella Brant had been a model wife to Rubens and he mourned her for four years. In a letter to the French statesman Dupuy, one of his intimate friends, Rubens thus praises her: "Never displaying bitterness or weakness, her kindness and loyalty were perfect and her rare qualities, having made her beloved during her



THE VISITATION
In the Villa Borghese, Rome
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life, have caused her to be regretted by all after her death." Still, his friends now repeatedly urged him to take another helpmate. He was in his fifty-fourth year when he married Helena Fourment, a very beautiful and amiable young lady of the middle class. Rubens gives a shrewd reason for choosing a bride from this class. In writing to his friend, Peiresc, he says: "I have taken a young woman of honorable but middle-class parentage, although everyone advised me to choose a court lady. But I feared above everything to find pride in my companion, that special blemish of the nobility. This is why I have chosen one who will not blush to see me handle a paint brush." Evidently, Rubens was determined to continue his career as a painter and feared that if he should wed a noble maiden she would object to his continuing to win his livelihood with his brush.

In the meantime a new governor came to Flanders. The Infanta Isabella, Rubens' patroness, desired in her old age to retire into the religious life, but she died before the new governor arrived. Rubens was called upon to decorate the city for his coming, and most magnificently did he discharge the task. "All the leading artists of the city," says Rea, "were engaged upon the work, both sculptors and painters, carrying out the plans evolved by the leader of them all, Rubens. There were triumphal arches, 'theatres' placed by the wayside from which allegorical personages delivered allegorical discourses in choice Latin; and there was a magnificent portico celebrating the emperors of the House of Hapsburg. The whole route of the procession was one succession of brilliant effects. The entire affair can hardly ever have been surpassed for magnificence and quality."

The Archduke Ferdinand, the new governor, was immensely pleased, and sent for Rubens to express his appreciation to him, but the messenger found the poor artist confined to his house, tired to death and with an attack of the gout from his fatigue. Wearied by this work, Rubens resolved to go to the country, and so he purchased the manor of Steen, but even this quiet place did not restore his worn out powers. Repeated attacks of gout continually inter-

rupted his work. Feeling death approaching he made careful legal settlements of all his affairs, while continuing to direct his great staff of workers. As the spring of 1640 came on he grew worse, and on the 30th of May of that year he expired, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He died at the summit of his career, surrounded by all that makes the life of man on earth contented and happy. All his children seem to have comforted him and gladdened his heart. His oldest son, Albert, was a distinguished archeologist; Francis was elected councillor at the Court of Brabant; Peter Paul, who was named after him, became a priest; his oldest daughter, Clara, married Philip von Parys, and her descendants still survive. His daughter Isabella died at the age of seventeen; and his next daughter Constantina, who was born after her father's death, became a nun. His own wife, Helena, was married again to an assessor of Antwerp.

The multiplicity and vastness of Rubens' works astound one. "He was not only the most prolific of artists—for he painted at least thirteen hundred pictures, of which two-thirds were executed almost entirely by his own hand—but also the most many-sided," says Knackfuss. "Never before had a single artist left so powerful an effect on the art of his own country as did Rubens. We may see his impulse alike in Van Dyck's portraits and in Teniers' subjects; alike in the landscapes as well as the 'studies in still life' of the Belgian school. All bear his mark, even the historical compositions executed at that period. Sculptors and architects also learned from him."

Here are some of the sayings of the critics concerning him:

"The spectacular is his domain. Passions, attitudes of the body, expressions of countenance—he stamps all with the directness of his character, the warmth of his blood, and the magnificence of his vision. There is a glory, a trumpet call in his grossest works. His was the special gift of eloquence. His language, to define it accurately, is what in literature is called oratorical. . . . Here are much blood and physical vigor, but a winged spirit; a man who fears not the horrible, but has a tender and truly serene



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN
In the Colonna Gallery, Rome

soul; here are hideousness and brutality, a total absence of taste in form, combined with an ardor which transforms ugliness into force, bloody brutality into terror." (Eugene Fromentin.)

"Rubens is great, many-sided, and harmonious; with his gifts and training he almost appears like a grand figure of antiquity." —(Wilhelm Bode.)

Rubens himself said in a letter to W. Trumbull, quoted by several authors: "The large size of a picture gives us painters more courage to represent our ideas with the utmost freedom and semblance of reality. I confess myself to be, by a natural instinct, better fitted to execute works of the largest size." (Letters of Rubens to W. Trumbull.)

Of his personal appearance Roger de Piles thus writes: "He was of large stature and commanding presence, and his features were well formed and regular. His cheeks were ruddy, his hair auburn-colored, his eyes bright but not piercing, his countenance laughing, agreeable, and open. His manners were engaging, his humor easy, his conversation apt, his wit sparkling and keen, his fashion of speaking dignified, and the sound of his voice most agreeable. He ate and drank sparingly that he might not by satiety cloud or dull his faculties. This sober, pious and upright character of Rubens contrasts with what seems to many critics the abandoned coarseness of many of his works, which have puzzled his biographers."

"Peter Paul," says Hope Rea, "we must remember was a sincerely religious man, his reputation for probity and virtue was honestly earned, his life was open as the day and had no discreditable byways or mysteries. He was in all relations of life an honorable man and a gentleman, yet there is this all-pervading semblance of a degraded taste, and that often in works by which he has best expressed himself.

"The richness of his nature does not prevent our astonishment at the curious versatility of his complex mind, capable of such strange combinations. How could the sincere Catholic and the painter who indulged in such bold audacities co-exist? How could



THE HOLY FAMILY
In the Pitti Palace, Florence

this man, after hearing mass, calmly take up his brushes and paint these licentious and feverish images, with a firm sure hand?"

But it is useless to dwell on this riddle. The truth is, one supposes, that Rubens was a child of his time, influenced by its standards and estimates. Being the good man that he was he may have felt that his compositions, which surely were not dangerous to himself, would be no more so to the people among whom he lived. Still it is deeply to be regretted from the standpoint of these days that so many of his works shock good taste. One can only say that the wise student will disregard these and rather turn his attention to those splendid works of Rubens concerning which we have briefly commented in this article. In the painting of the Madonnas, let us say in conclusion, Rubens was not as happy as he was in some of the other departments of his art. In this regard he does not approach the chaste creations of Raphael nor the devout works of Murillo.

George Charles Williamson thus speaks of Rubens: "He has been the subject of many biographies and of constant research. He is always somewhat of a mystery, for at first one is depressed by his very exuberance, his unbridled artistic frenzy, and the vast show of flesh and power which characterize his pictures, while to many who love tenderness, mysticism, a sensitive quality and stately dignity, his impropriety and exaggerated enthusiasm is repugnant. Some of the greatest artists, such as Rossetti, were in their early days unable to understand the anomalies in the art of Rubens or to appreciate his greatest pictures even in their most lenient moods. There is such an abundant glory, such powerful organic life in the work of this majestic colorist, that his pictures are not easy to appreciate until one is practically vanquished by the glory of their color and the luxuriance of their unrestraint. A deeper consideration awakens fuller appreciation and the marvelous conceptions of the artist and his exuberant ideas of magnificence impress and reveal the high position of the painter.

"In his drawings he is almost supreme. His religious pictures, when properly regarded and thoughtfully understood, are impres-



THE LION HUNT
In the Old Pinakothek, Munich

sive in their intense religious quality apart from the fury of color and extravagance. His portraits are triumphant, sometimes perhaps sensual, often dreamy, always impressive. He is unequalled as to colors, and though fuller of the delights of earth than of heaven, yet when the nature of the man is understood the intensely devout quality of his beautiful religious pictures can be appreciated. It is, however, as a draughtsman and colorist, as a master of pageant and a decorator of the highest position that the fame of Rubens has been created."

Hymans and Konody speak as follows: "Rubens has little of the Italian grace and refinement; he was a Fleming throughout, notwithstanding his frequent recollections of those Italian masters whom he most admired, and who themselves have little, if anything, in common with Raphael. But it must be borne in mind how completely his predecessors were frozen into stiffness through Italianization, and how necessary it was to bring back the Flemish school to life and nature. Critics have spoken of Rubens' historical improprieties. Of course nobody could suppose that his classical learning did not go far enough to know that the heroines of the Old Testament or of Roman history were not dressed out as ladies of his time; but in this respect he only follows the examples of Titian, Veronese, and many others. In no other school do we find these animated hunts of lions, tigers, and even the hippopotamus and the crocodile, which may be reckoned among the finest specimens of art; and here again are life and nature displayed with the utmost power. 'His horses are perfect in their kind,' says Reynolds; 'his dogs are of the strong Flemish breed, and his landscapes the most charming pictures of Brabantine scenery, in the midst of which lay his seat of Steen. As a portrait painter, although less refined than Van Dyck, he shows that eminent master the way. * * *

"For nearly one hundred years the Flemish school may be said to have been but a reflection of the Rubenesque principles. Although Jordaens and Erasmus Quelin lived till 1678, the school might be termed a body without soul."

ANTHONY VAN DYCK



IT was Rubens who, as we have seen, immortally surpassed all other painters of the Low Countries and left his works to the museums of Europe as a legacy not to be equaled for richness, variety and splendor, either by his contemporaries or by the painters of after time. But there was one close friend and follower of Rubens, like himself a native of the good town of Antwerp, who was to come second only to that great master in artistic fame and who indeed in one sphere of painting, that of portraiture, was to excel not only Rubens, but almost all other painters whatsoever. This man was Anthony Van Dyck.

The names of Rubens and Van Dyck may well be spoken together, not only by reason of their close association and the influence of the one upon the other, but also because of some curious contrasts which these two men present in their characters and their work. Naturally Rubens had a most powerful influence upon Van Dyck, who was twenty-two years his junior and who came to the practice of the painter's art in Antwerp at a time when the star of Rubens was so far in the ascendant that all of his place and time had perforce to submit to his influence.

Peter Paul Rubens fully deserved this paramount sway which he held like a king over Flemish painters. The schools of art of the Low Countries, which such men as Metsys and David had founded, were by way of being undone by the influence of Italian standards, which imprudent painters were adopting without reference to their national genius. It was Rubens who, coming from Italy fully equipped with the technique of his art and having assimilated and made his own what was best in the traditions of the Italian painters, had the strength and courage to originate a style of painting in accord with the genius of his nation. He prudently avoided that unwise imitation of Michelangelo and Raphael which was the rock on which so many of his contemporaries in the Low Countries were making shipwreck and diverted Flemish art into the more



PORTRAIT OF M^{LLE}. DE GOTTINGES
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

natural and congenial channels in which it was to run for many generations.

When Van Dyck, therefore, began to practice his art he came at once under the mighty influence of Rubens. The fact that he was received as one of the assistants in Rubens' studio brought him still more directly under the sway of the master. But though Van Dyck so early became subject to Rubens' inspiration his work and his character were both quite distinct from his master's. Indeed, we find here one of those sharp contrasts between friends of the same age and under the same influences which give us deeper insight into the diversities of human nature and perhaps a clearer realization of the manner in which a man's life and his art may flow in quite different channels.

While the character of Rubens was remarkably serene, upright, pious and self-governed, his life well regulated and his conduct above reproach all during his days, the work of the great master is not so free from censure. In the foregoing article we have indicated the strange and sometimes deplorable contrasts between his character and his work, the one so irreproachable, the other often so strangely coarse and bold, with an audacity that approaches license and a freedom that shocks the Christian sense. Thus some of Rubens' work belies his life, and had we nothing whereby to judge him but certain of the paintings from his hand we might have thought him a bold and careless voluptuary, not the pious Christian, the good husband and father and the patriotic citizen which he really was.

The life of Van Dyck on the other hand was unhappily of a very different character from that of Rubens. Though he seems to have been brought up among good surroundings and displays in some of the actions of his life a sincere religious feeling, he appears to have been, in great measure, carried away by the love of pleasure and dissipation which, together with the severe labor he imposed on himself for the sake of his art, brought him to an untimely end. In his works, however, those at least which have won him fame and which are found oftenest reproduced and are most widely known,

there appears a refinement and a sense of propriety surpassing quite notably what is to be observed in the works of Rubens.

There is moreover in the religious work of Van Dyck a touching sincerity and intensity of feeling which one does not always find in the corresponding pieces of his master. This contrast between the two painters has been brought out by Max Rooses in a passage which it may be worth while to transcribe.

“Comparing Van Dyck with Rubens, we may say that the former lacked somewhat of the inventive power and creative imagination of the latter, as well as of his brilliancy of color and dramatic grouping. But on the other hand, Van Dyck had other gifts of nature: His extreme originality, his intense feeling and the impressive manner in which all religious and sacred subjects touched him to the quick, were developed to a greater extent than in the nature of his illustrious master. God Incarnate, suffering on the cross; His eyes turned in supplication to His Father in heaven; the darkness that surrounded the mount; the agony and sadness of the scene; all these are favorite subjects with Van Dyck and carried out with wonderful realism, showing the tenderness of his feeling and the religiousness of his mind.

“Sometimes he depicts the Savior alone, at other times He is supported by His loving mother or by the saints and holy women, some even swooning in bitter grief at the injustice done to their dear Lord. No longer do we see the golden lights of Rubens, but a silvery sheen has crept over the scene and we are given the heart-broken Disciples and the sorrowing women who followed Christ and bemoaned the agony of His fate. Van Dyck saw the tragedy of Golgotha through the eyes of love, and we enter into his feelings when we gaze upon those subjects which flowed with so much power from his able brush. More touching still is the sight of that tenderest of mothers weeping over the dead body of her son and calling earth to witness that there exists no sorrow like unto hers.

“Then again the subject changes to that of a mother’s joy. The Virgin, holding the holy child in her arms, beaming with blissful admiration, happiness speaking from every feature of her face.



PORTRAIT OF JAMES STUART
In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Sometimes we see Joseph at the back, proud and happy too, or John, the Savior's playmate, at the knee of the Virgin, gazing in reverence and holy fear at the Child God.

"All these pictures bring to our mind thoughts of love and purity in the most perfect sense. Either we see a mother's joy, her tender caressing care for her infant, eyes bright with pride and felicity, or a mother's grief, her intense sorrow and suffering, the agony of her torn and bleeding heart speaking to us, as if imploring our sympathy, our pity, our compassion. In all these subjects we recognize Van Dyck's thorough knowledge of life in all its various phases, his conception of joy and grief, his sensitive nature and his power to portray such divine love as the Virgin had for her holy Babe and the intensity of her sorrow when seeing her Son, born of her flesh . . . suffering the greatest agony and ignominy that has ever fallen to the lot of man. Such scenes are put upon canvas by Van Dyck, with a greater power of realism and truthfulness than by any other artist of his genre.

"The expression of ecstasy that we find in certain of his madonnas and saints is entrancing, and brings a feeling of piety and godliness which only a Van Dyck can produce. Look at his St. Rosalie, and the Blessed Hermanns Joseph in Vienna; his St. Augustine in the church in Antwerp dedicated to that saint; his St. Francis in the Madrid Museum; they all express a holiness and a deep sense of true religion such as we do not find in the expressions on the faces of ordinary mortals, however good they may be."

Anthony Van Dyck was born in Antwerp on March 22, 1599. The grandfather had been a well-to-do and flourishing merchant of silks and his eldest son Frans, the father of the painter, succeeded to the silk business in which he thrived in his turn. There was a distinctly pious vein in the family. Frans acted as director of the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the Cathedral. Of his two sons and five daughters who grew up, all but one entered the service of the Church, and this one was the painter himself. His sister Anna became an Augustinian nun, Susanna, Cornelia and Isabel became Beguines at Antwerp, and his younger brother Theodore became



THE HOLY FAMILY
In the Pinacotheca, Turin



THE MADONNA WITH THE CHILD AND ANGELS
In the Academy of St. Luke, Rome

pastor of Minderhout and professor of theology. Many actions of Van Dyck's life show how strong a tie of affection united him with his family and how devoted he was to his brother and to his sisters the religious.

His mother's family seemed to have been gifted in some sort with artistic talent. His mother herself, Maria Cupers, is said to have been very skillful in embroidery, and no doubt the boy was early thrown in with people of artistic taste and temperament. We first hear of him studying art when he was barely eleven years old in the studio of Hendrik Van Balen, one of the leading painters of Antwerp. Van Balen was a good painter, not possessed of very much originality, indeed, but a graceful and accurate worker and, it seems, a good teacher. A number of artists who afterwards gained reputation, among them Frans Snyders, the great painter of animals, had already been pupils of Van Balen.

When he was but little more than fourteen years of age Van Dyck had already begun to make portraits. In 1615, when he was about sixteen years of age, he had got on far enough in his art to set up for himself in a house which he seems to have shared with his fellow pupil and friend Jan Brueghel the younger. He appears in 1616 and 1617 to have been living independently of his parents. About this time he painted the twelve apostles and Christ, a set of heads, and he seems to have had an assistant even at this early age, one Harmen Sergaes who copied this set of paintings. "These paintings" says Lionel Cust, whose writings on Van Dyck are authoritative and copious, "were considered remarkable and were exhibited at the house of a connoisseur and picture dealer, Wilhelm Verhagen, at Antwerp, where they were seen and admired by many persons of note, including the great Rubens himself." Van Dyck at this time was about seventeen years of age. One may judge from this the precociousness of his talent.

On February 11, 1618, an unusual distinction for so young an artist was conferred upon Van Dyck. He was admitted to the freedom of the Guild of St. Luke, the Guild of painters. It is not clear that he was ever a pupil in Rubens' studio, though it is just possible

that he may have had some years of experience under that master and that the fact has not been recorded. Bellori, the historian of painting, makes a remark which indicates that he believed him to have been a pupil of Rubens. "When Anthony's father took him away from Rubens' school," he says, "it is generally supposed to have been at the time when he was painting Christ Bearing the Cross for the church of the Dominicans, after Rubens' earliest manner of painting."

However this may be it is certain that Rubens was not slow to recognize the genius of the young painter, and it was not long before he invited him to come into his own studio as his assistant (*allievo*). We have indicated in a previous article the power of this great man over those who were his assistants. In Max Rooses' book upon Van Dyck he emphasizes the immense and royal sway of Rubens in his world of art. "He was," he says, "the awakener and arouser of the decaying older school; he was looked upon as a god and as infallible, and was overwhelmed with pupils, many of whom he had to turn from his doors. Every artist followed in his footsteps, obeyed his laws and worshipped at his shrine; the young followed blindly, the older men changed their ideas and their method of painting; even those who had won their spurs became his servants, and men of strong personalities and possessed of much talent moulded their style after that of the great master. This admiration and the sway he exercised over the art world were unparalleled and unprecedented.

"And Van Dyck was no exception. He too worshipped at the feet of Rubens, and, as often happens in the case of ardent youth, he carried the master's style and method to greater lengths than he had done himself—in fact out-Rubensed Rubens. He kept to the manner of painting even after Rubens had discarded it himself."

One remembers from the life of Rubens that the great master had a special predilection for this most talented of his pupils. It was Rubens' practice in carrying out his great works to make a sketch in oils in miniature. His assistants would then draw the



ST. CATHERINE
In the Royal Gallery at Buckingham Palace, London



REPOSE ON THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
In the Pinakothek, Munich

work to the scale intended. Sometimes Rubens then completed the work with his own hands, at other times his assistants did most of the painting and Rubens merely put on the finishing touches. So when the Jesuit church was decorated in this way with many paintings it was stipulated that Van Dyck should draw the work full-size from Rubens' sketches, while the father superior agreed that one painting for one of the side altars might be entrusted entirely to Van Dyck.

There is an amusing story told of an incident that occurred about this time which shows the esteem in which Rubens held Van Dyck. One day when the master had gone for a ride in the country his assistants were playing pranks in the studio in his absence. As bad luck would have it, a fresh painting was standing on the easel at which Rubens had been at work, and in their rough play the luckless assistants did it considerable injury. They were dismayed at what they had done and begged Van Dyck to repair the damage, because no one of them was capable of doing it except he. Van Dyck did the work skilfully but not so adroitly as to deceive the eye of the painter. On Rubens' return he detected what had been done, but he let Van Dyck's work stand and approved its excellence.

It is no doubt from Rubens, whom he so admired, that Van Dyck derived his persistent and lifelong ambition to execute religious and historical compositions. Withal his greatest excellence was in portrait painting, yet we should be sad to lose those feeling and exquisite religious paintings with which he enriched the churches of his native land. Some of the paintings of Van Dyck at this period, in collaboration with Rubens or independently, are so similar to the works of the master himself that it is almost impossible to distinguish them from Rubens' own paintings in conception and in execution.

But Van Dyck was not to remain so very long in Rubens' company. Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, was a great lover and patron of art, as was his wife Alethea Talbot. In June, 1620, the Countess left England to travel on the continent with her two sons for their education, and a correspondent mentions that she sat for



CHRIST AND THE TRIBUTE-MONEY
In the Palazzo, Genoa

her portrait to Rubens, that Van Dyck is always with his master and Van Dyck's works are almost as much esteemed as those of Rubens. This correspondent, who writes to the Earl of Arundel himself, adds that since Van Dyck's parents are wealthy and since he sees how well Rubens is doing in the way of amassing riches by his art it would be difficult to get him to leave Antwerp. Historians of art have inferred from this correspondence that either Arundel or his wife or both were trying to secure Van Dyck's services to go to England.

There was a dearth of first-rate painters in England at this period. Certain Dutch artists had settled there whose work was mainly painting portraits. The court painter Van Somer had fallen ill, and it may have been the fear that an unworthy painter might succeed him which induced the Arundels to urge Van Dyck to come to England. Whatever may have been their motive their efforts were successful. In November, 1620, Van Dyck was in England and the king had given him a pension of a hundred pounds a year.

His first visit to that country was extremely brief. For some mysterious reason, Mytens, the Dutch painter, succeeded Van Somer as court painter, and Van Dyck was given the king's leave to travel on the continent. His whole year's pension of a hundred pounds was paid him after about four months, "for special service by him performed for his majesty." So Van Dyck set forth on his travels. He went to Antwerp and there abode a short time before leaving for Italy. But on October 3, 1621, riding, it is said, the best horse that Rubens had to give him as a farewell present, Van Dyck left Antwerp, stopped a short time in Brussels and then set out for Genoa, which he reached on November 20. There was a little colony of his friends in that city, and he received there a warm welcome and many commissions. For the next six or seven years he was to go from one city of Italy to the other, studying the great masters, but leaving behind him in many places masterpieces of his own which were to be added to the cherished treasures of that land already so rich in art.

It would require much space to record these wanderings of Van Dyck from Genoa to Milan, from Milan to Rome, thence to Florence, Bologna, the greatest art center of the day, and Venice, where the masterpieces of Titian and Tintoretto were ready to give him inspiration. From Venice Van Dyck went to Mantua, to that court of the Gonzagas where Rubens had been so kindly entertained, thence perhaps to Turin and Genoa, and finally back again to Rome. In this city, in 1623, Van Dyck painted a striking picture of Cardinal Bentivoglio which is one of the most excellent of portraits, both as a work of art and as a revelation of character.

There is a curious account given of the way in which Van Dyck fell out with a colony of his compatriots, artists like himself, who had formed a club of their own where they reveled together in no very refined way. Van Dyck was too cultured and fastidious to consort with such boon companions. He shrank from their society, and they retaliated by calling him the gentleman painter and mocking his fine ways and choice demeanor. Indeed, they made Rome so warm for him that he went back to Genoa.

But his years of wandering were approaching their end. He turned his thoughts and his steps back to his native land, and as he had come out to Italy on horseback across France, so now with heavier baggage he probably sought an easier way and returned on the waters of the Rhine.

Back in Antwerp Van Dyck found himself the fashion, and commissions came thick upon him. Isabella, the regent of the Netherlands, daughter of Philip II of Spain and widow of the Archduke Albert, appointed him her court painter. On the death of her husband she had entered among the nuns of St. Clara, and it was in religious dress that Van Dyck painted her portraits. His religious nature now showed itself not only in the paintings of religious pictures, but in his entering the young men's sodality which had been founded by the Jesuits of Antwerp. For this confraternity Van Dyck painted two of his best pictures, the *Crowning of St. Rosalia*, painted in 1629, and the *mystic marriage of Blessed Herman* painted in 1630.



CHARLES I.
In the Dresden Gallery

During the following years, besides many portraits, Van Dyck executed a number of large religious pictures. It may be interesting to read what Lionel Cust, one of the chief authorities on Van Dyck and from whose work we have drawn largely for this article, has to say concerning these religious paintings executed at this time.

“During the next few years, in addition to his many portraits, Van Dyck painted a series of large church pictures, which, if they do not add any particular laurels to his fame, at all events deserve to rank among the most important works in this branch of painting. It is characteristic of Van Dyck’s adaptable genius that on returning to his native land he should have laid aside the mantle of Titian and reassumed that of Rubens. It may be alleged that in either case, certainly in that of Rubens, the mantle proved a giant’s robe to Van Dyck. Rubens had already perceived that the rich warm sunset tones of the Venetian painters would be ineffective under the leaden skies of the north and amid the vast soaring pillars of the Gothic churches. Something in a brighter, gayer tone of color was required, something that received and reflected light rather than gave it out from itself. This may be well seen in the case of Rubens’ great pictures in the Cathedral at Antwerp. Van Dyck naturally sought to follow his master in this line, but as he could never shake off his Italian influence and a decided preference for blacks and grays, which he shared with his great contemporary Velasquez, and as moreover he was lacking in invention and inspiration and not always ashamed to appropriate his master’s designs, his great church paintings have met with less appreciation than they deserve.

“Yet these paintings have great merits, discernible even when neglect or ignorant restoration has wrecked them beyond recall. For one thing Van Dyck, though his life outside his art was luxurious and worldly, had been brought up under powerful religious influences. To his father, his brother the priest, his sisters the nuns or *beguines*, he was sincerely attached. To Rubens the incidents of the Passion were little more than interesting subjects

for academic studies and physiognomical expression. To Van Dyck, however, they appeared as scenes of poignant reality. Christ, as painted by Van Dyck, especially at Antwerp, is a true sufferer. His pain and torments before or during the crucifixion, the pathos of his death and burial—the *Nood Gods* as the Flemish title goes—are charged with painful reality of feeling. Tears run down the Virgin Mother's cheeks, the very angels are agonized, as in the paintings of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The infant Christ is represented in tender and engaging variety, though the divine inspiration seems lacking, which should distinguish him from those boy angels or *amorini*, in which Van Dyck so much excelled."

One of the best of these pictures was painted as an act of filial piety. It is the picture of the Crucifixion with St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena standing on either side of the Cross. It is an enormous painting and splendid in its composition. Christ is lifted up high above the earth against the darkened sky in the agony of His eternal sacrifice for our redemption. The heavy clouds throw into relief His suffering form. Two angels hover near Him, expressing by their gestures their sympathy and compassion, and a third angel, seated on the rock on which the cross is placed, points to the cross, while below him is the inverted torch of life. To the right of the cross stands St. Catherine of Siena, that chosen spouse of Christ, fainting with sorrow while she embraces the feet of the suffering Savior. Her expression and the whole contour of her form indicate an unutterable grief and compassion.

On the other side St. Dominic, his eyes swollen with weeping, looks up in adoration and astonishment as if aghast at the wickednesses of mankind which have caused such suffering. The picture was made for the church of the Dominican nuns, and an inscription at the foot of the cross reads as follows: "That the earth might lie lightly on his father, Van Dyck rolled this stone to the cross and gave it to this place." In a memorandum left by one of the prioresses of the convent she says: "In the year 1629 our church was much honored by the skillful painter Anthony Van Dyck, who



CHILDREN OF CHARLES I.
In the Dresden Gallery

for the sake of certain friendship and care shown us by his father during his absence presented our church with a splendid altarpiece, his father having requested him on his death-bed to do so. . . . May God reward the family of Van Dyck in eternity."

But, unlike Rubens, Van Dyck was not to remain long in the city of his birth. Though he had far exceeded the leave of eight months given him by the king, still Charles I reclaimed his portrait painter, and so when he had just completed the thirty-second year of his age we find him back in England. Now began the most gorgeous period of Van Dyck's career. On July 5, 1632, he was knighted at St. James' Palace. A house was found for him in Black Friars, looking over the Thames, and a special landing stage was built for the royal party to come to the painter's house. He painted beautiful portraits of the king, the queen, the royal children and was given a vast number of other commissions. He was constantly employed by the king and painted him many times and the queen almost as often. There are said to be five and twenty portraits of this latter by Van Dyck's hand. One of the most charming of the pictures is a group of the three royal children, painted in 1635, and another of the five children in 1637, little Princess Anne having lived just long enough to be caught and kept forever by the painter's magical brush.

The lords and ladies of the English court were also so numerous portrayed that Walpole remarks: "His works are so fruitful in this country that the generality of our people can scarcely avoid thinking him their countryman."

Yet Van Dyck's career, though so crowded and prosperous, was not to extend much longer. His looseness of living and intemperance both of work and dissipation depleted his fortune and ruined his bodily strength. The king and queen, who were themselves unimpeachable in their private life, sought to save the poor painter from his evil ways by finding him a wife, and through their good offices he wed Mary Ruthven, who was related to some of the best families in Scotland. Their wedded life seems to have been happy, but it was very brief. After a disappointing trip to Paris, where a



CHRIST ON THE CROSS
In the Villa Albani, Rome

commission he had hoped to receive was given to Poussin, a native painter, Van Dyck came back to London in November, 1641, with shattered health and broken spirits. The king sent his own physician to try to restore him to health, but in vain. A daughter was born to him on December 1, 1641, and on the day of her baptism, on December 9, Van Dyck died at Black Friars, aged forty-two years, eight months and seven days. He was buried on December 11 in St. Paul's Cathedral, and a monument was erected to his memory, but, alas, both his monument and all that was mortal of himself were destroyed in the great fire of 1666. The daughter, Justinana, inherited from her father a talent for painting. She became a Catholic and her three daughters joined the *beguines*.

Mr. Lionel Cust thus sums up his appreciation of Van Dyck, in a tone which is temperate enough and correct in its estimate. "In reviewing the life and work of a painter like Van Dyck," he says, "it is difficult to know where exactly to place him in the ranks of the great artists of the world. In portraiture he ranks among the first, with Rembrandt and Velasquez. In history he cannot be said to have attained the highest rank, though his paintings of this class have been unduly depreciated. He was no pioneer of art, like Van Eyck, Durer, or Velasquez; he was no monarch of painting, like Raphael, Titian, Rubens, or Rembrandt. Yet Van Dyck, without originating anything, while appropriating the ideas of others or the prevailing fashion of a country or a people, created a new world of his own in painting, and in England at all events diverted the whole trend of painting into a new and different course. The lineage in art is direct and well defined which connects Van Dyck with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough. At Antwerp he was overshadowed by the colossal genius of Rubens, but in London he found no rival, and remains unequaled to this day.

"Van Dyck, in fact, though lacking in some of the elements of greatness, was perhaps the most consummate artist that ever lived, and one of the greatest masters of style in painting. As a draughtsman and as a painter he is never at fault. Decision and brilliancy are to be found on equal terms in his painting. There is

no ignoble or mean touch in them, no dallying with the grosser side of humanity, leading perhaps even to an exaggeration of refinement and nobility in his portraits."

A favorite subject of Van Dyck was the Crucifixion. Perhaps this was because he had himself a special devotion to this mystery, but perhaps too because pictures of the Crucifixion were especially in demand. Be this as it may, some of his finest religious paintings deal with this touching scene, and he has rendered it in a most reverent and fitting way. We have already spoken of the Crucifixion with St. Dominic and St. Catherine now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In the same gallery is the picture, often reproduced in missals and pious books, of Christ expiring on the cross. "In this picture," says Rooses, "as well as in some others, Van Dyck nearly touches the ideal. . . . The life and soul of the picture is concentrated in the face, which, although full of agony, does not produce upon us too great a shock."

In St. Michael's Church in Ghent is to be found the Crucifixion called Christ with the Sponge, which contains what is said to be the most beautiful representation of the Blessed Mother ever painted by Van Dyck. In the Church of Notre Dame at Dendermonde is another group of the Crucifixion with St. Francis of Assisi, where our Lord is represented as still alive, looking down at His mother, with unutterable suffering. In the Museum in Antwerp one finds a group representing Christ after He had been taken down from the Cross. Another picture of Christ in the Tomb, very touching and beautiful, is to be found in the same museum. The Blessed Mother wears a look of intensest grief, while St. John is pointing out to an angel the wounds in Our Lord's left hand. Finally, in the picture called Mount Calvary, in the church of St. Rombout, at Malines, the face of the Blessed Virgin is said to be one of the most excellent of Van Dyck's creations.

But it is not only in sorrowful themes that Van Dyck has shown his religious feeling. The beautiful picture of the Adoration of the Shepherds in the church of St. Mary at Dendermonde, that of the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine now in London, the Coronation



THE DEPOSITION IN THE SEPULCHER
In the Pitti Palace, Florence



REPOSE IN EGYPT
In the Pitti Palace, Florence

of St. Rosalia by the Child Jesus, in Vienna, and the very well-known Virgin and Child with the angels playing instruments, now in the Academy of St. Luke in Rome, together with the repose of the Holy Family in Egypt, are all beautiful examples of religious art.

One cannot conclude without some words about the beautiful pictures of children in which this painter so singularly excelled. He loved to paint them in groups, and all these groups are charming. "They are not," says Rooses, "pictures which suggest to our minds noisy, rollicking children, like those painted by Rubens, but they give us the impression of quiet dignified youth. There is something royal in their attitudes, not so much from the magnificence of their garments as by their look of repose. Van Dyck was never truer to nature than when he painted these noble children. It would seem almost as if he portrayed the nobility of their minds as well as the beauty of their bodies. He encircles these little people with an imaginary halo, treating them with the respect due to their exalted station in life. If you look at the picture of King Charles' children, in Turin, you will understand what I mean. These children are not posed as if they were grown up, they are not dressed for the occasion, but they have on their nursery frocks and caps, and gaze with amazement at the painter who is desiring them to stand still. All these portraits of children are painted with care and precision, showing that the painter interested himself most of all in that style of work. They are, for the most part, painted in clear, soft tones and in the subdued light of a drawing room. In these pictures we consider that the master reached the pinnacle of his glory and the summit of his originality."

Taking him all in all, Van Dyck was a curious combination of qualities. He had deep religious feeling, yet would not, as Rubens did, make his life square with it. He loved the brilliance of the court, yet painted best, not the court ladies, but Madonnas and little children. His great ambition was to be a historical painter, yet it is in portraiture that he most excels. At the summit of his career, when fame and fortune and royal favor were his to the full,



PORTRAIT OF HELENA DUBOIS
In the Art Institute, Chicago, Ill.

he sighingly complained that pleasure and fashion had drained his purse as they had sapped his health. He died in the heyday of his age, a broken and saddened man, but leaving behind him an artistic reputation second only to that of his great master Rubens, and which is, it seems, established for all time. May the many religious canvases which he adorned with his deeply pious and touching conceptions have pleaded for him at the last, and may the prayer of the Dominican prioress, to whose convent he gave the great painting of the Crucifixion, have been heard in his favor. "May God," she said, as we have told before, "reward the family of Van Dyck in eternity."

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